





HOW SHE
DID IT

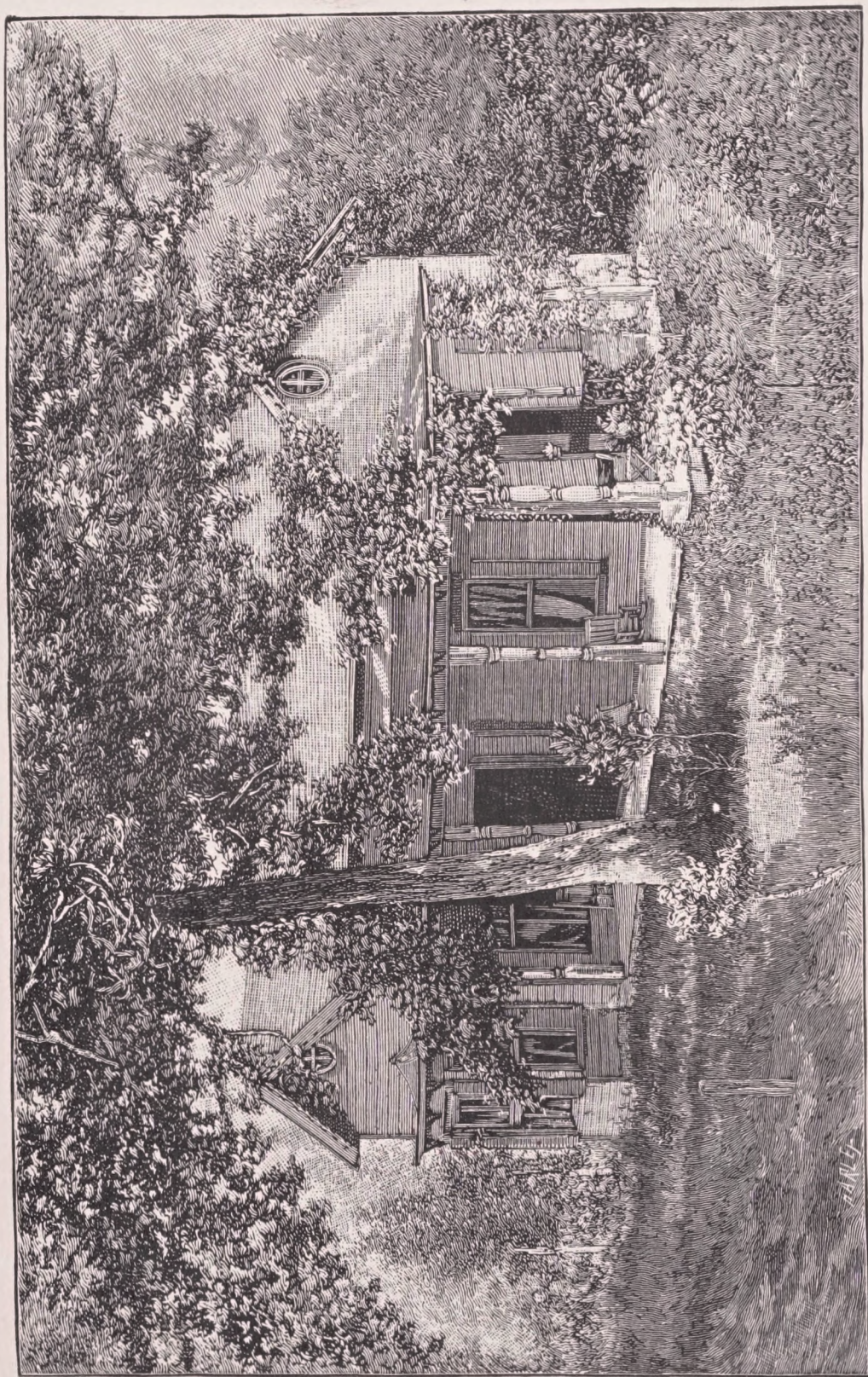
OR

COMFORT ON \$150 A YEAR

BY

MARY CRUGER

NEW YORK: D. APPLETON & CO.



THE HOUSE THAT FAITH BUILT.

HOW SHE DID IT

OR

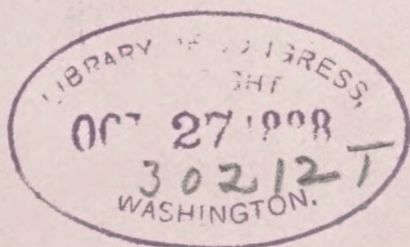
COMFORT ON \$150 A YEAR

BY

MARY CRUGER

“ Our best doing is our best enjoyment.”

JACOBI.



NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

1888

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TO THE READER.

MANY books are written full of plausible theories and attractive schemes of living which look charmingly on paper, and fill many idle hearts with the rapture of a hoped for success in the emergencies of life. But they are often but vanishing dreams, incapable of realization, and only productive of cruel disappointment when essayed to be put in practice.

The author of this little book wishes to say, as strongly and impressively as words can express it, that its story is not merely founded on fact, but is an actual portrayal, step by step, of her own experience, her own wonderful success in carrying out a long cherished theory of comfortable economy. The every-day life described is not a poetically imagined affair, but one that she has absolutely lived and gloried in. The unique home, the very woods and rocks, bear witness every day to the truths which the author has sought to reveal, as solving one of the difficult and perplexing social problems of the day.

MONTROSE, 1888.

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HOW SHE DID IT.

CHAPTER I.

A CRITICAL DISCUSSION.

It is much easier to be critical than correct.

DISRAELI.

What custom wills, in all things should we do't
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heaped
For truth to overpeer.—SHAKESPEARE.

“It is a grave problem,” said Mrs. Nymscy-
witch, very thoughtfully.

“An utter absurdity rather!” cried Lady
Disdain, as she arranged her hat-strings with an
air of lofty impatience. “What human being
could live on three hundred a year?”

“It would be literal starvation, my dear,”
chimed in Mrs. El Dorado with gentle remon-
strance in her tones.

“Still I mean to try it!” returned Faith
Arden with steady resoluteness, as she clasped
her hands earnestly together. “In fact, I have
already made all my arrangements.”

"Then you had better unmake them."

"No! it is too late for that. The land is bought."

"What! that wild heap of rocks? Who but a lunatic would dream of building a house in such a lonely, dreary spot?"

"If you would only be willing to consider its capabilities," urged Faith with wistful pleading in her dark eyes.

It tried her more than she was willing to admit, to have her friends so vehemently opposed to the one scheme of life she with her restricted resources had been able to plan.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Nymscywitch, kindly, "tell us then what you find to tempt you to this unusual proceeding."

Somewhat cheered by those encouraging tones, Faith said with eager warmth:

"You have no idea what a beautiful place it really is! With the rubbish and undergrowth cleared away, and the wild scrubby bushes removed, the daintiest little nooks, the prettiest vistas will show themselves—"

"That only the eye of Faith can discover as yet," interposed Mrs. Nymscywitch, dryly.

Then as they all smiled at her little joke, she added :

“Well ! and then ? You can’t live on nooks and vistas, you know.”

“I’m not so sure of that !” returned Faith, seriously, “I will have a house the plan of which I have carefully studied out, in which housekeeping shall become a practical delight, with no wearying or repulsive details. I will settle down to a life of pure enjoyment, into which the grosser elements of every-day existence shall have little place. I shall have every comfort, unalloyed by household anxiety ; and the bread of contentment will be sweeter to me than the richest feast you have ever spread before your guests in your own houses.”

“But bread ! my dear,” began Lady Disdain, who was rather literal in her limited comprehension of Faith’s meaning.

“I shall have more than bread ; I shall have all reasonable needs of soul and body duly supplied,” said Faith, her eyes shining, as a little flush crept over her face.

“You really can’t do it on three hundred a year,” interposed Mrs. El Dorado, practically ; “unless you don’t mean to pay your bills.”

"Where then would be my freedom from anxiety?" returned Faith, laughing.

"But your house, dear child!" said Mrs. Nymscywitch, "you can't build that out of your income."

"No! but a friend will lend what I need for that, on a mortgage, and I mean to save something every year, to pay it off by installments."

"Good gracious! just hear her! she talks of saving something out of that pitiful sum!" cried Lady Disdain, in genuine horror. "And what will you do for furniture?"

"You know my share of that at the old homestead is almost enough to begin with; and I have a few hundred dollars on hand to supply deficiencies."

"But the ground—your acre of rocks, as I call it—you must have paid for it a great deal more than it was worth."

"It cost two hundred and fifty dollars; and I have still a balance left."

"Tell me, Faith!" said Mrs. El Dorado, soberly, "do you think there is one shovelful of earth on your whole domain?"

"Oh, yes! several, I should think," returned Faith, tranquilly. "It really is a curious and

very picturesque mass of rocks, rising abruptly from the ground about fifty feet on the west side, with a rapid inclination toward the east that does not leave an actual level anywhere. Still, in all the crevices and broken edges a gradual accumulation of soil has formed, so that quite large trees stand in the deeper places."

"Is it so bad as that? I thought there was quite a grassy slope," began Mrs. Nymscywitch.

"In appearance, yes; but it is very deceitful. The more it looks like solid earth, the surer it is to be far more solid rock."

"I have the dimmest recollection of the place," said Mrs. Nymscywitch. "Just driving once or twice hurriedly by, without having any idea I should ever be interested in it, I scarcely know anything at all of its aspect or dimensions."

"Let me refresh your memory," replied Faith, taking a portfolio from the table, with a faint gleam of fun in her demure eyes. "Here is a sketch of the domain taken one windy day in March, when I went over to select a spot for the house."

As the three heads bent eagerly over the

paper, there was a moment's dismayed pause, broken only by gasps of horror, sighs of gloomy foreboding, and half-breathed interjections of mingled regret and unwilling admiration.

As a study of wild primitive forest-life, the sketch was a decided success. The gaunt branches that swayed so drearily before the March gale, the masses of dead leaves over which ridges of soiled snow yet lay, holding them imprisoned in their icy grasp, the broken tangled array of briers, and the unsightly *débris* of many long years of utter neglect, all made a picture that was dreary and unattractive indeed. The great mass of almost perpendicular rocks, stripped of their dainty summer array, with here and there a scraggy vine clinging like a huge lifeless serpent to the rough stone, inspired only a sense of their cheerlessness, and caused a shiver at the cold winds that seemed to dash so unavailingly against them.

"My dear child!" cried Mrs. Nymscywitch, at last, "you must give up this wild plan. Where could you place a building here that would not blow off the rocks at the first high wind? There wouldn't be much to choose between its toppling over the precipice on the

one hand, or rolling head over heels down the steep slope on the other."

"That did seem a difficulty at first," replied Faith, tranquilly. "I found at once it was altogether too breezy on the top there, so I chose a place under those big oak-trees, where it is more sheltered. In an emergency the house might be chained fast to the trees, you know."

"What an idea! I think I'd rather be dashed to pieces at once than to be rocked in that perilous fashion in such a forest cradle that would fall into fragments by degrees."

"I don't believe either danger will ever exist," returned Faith, still smiling demurely. "Now, here is another sketch, taken after the foundation was completed, which—"

"The foundation!" cried all in a breath. "You surely haven't begun—"

"Oh, yes! why should I lose time? That much was done by the middle of April, and it looked so oddly at that stage of the proceedings, I took this view of it also."

"But how it looks! One end of it is buried in the ground, and the other stands out in the air with the most impertinent expression I ever saw."

Faith let them study her sketch for some moments, and make all the comments they pleased unanswered. Then, taking from the portfolio a third paper, she laid it before them with fingers that trembled slightly with triumph, as did also her voice as she observed, quietly :

“But, in the end, you see, it doesn’t look so very badly.”

In speechless surprise the fair trio gazed at this crowning token of Faith’s zeal and energy. There was just enough in this new picture of the old rugged outlines, the piled-up rocks and huge trees to show it was indeed the same scene ; but how wonderfully changed ! Nature had done her part, bringing out with her magic touch the graceful foliage, the drooping, luxuriant vines, and the dainty carpet of wild flowers and soft mosses, while the swaying fronds of the ferns bent beneath the summer breeze, and nodded sportively over the points of rock which had protected them so sturdily from winter’s icy blasts. But the wonder was in the changes wrought by the hand of man, usually such vandal touches beside Nature’s creative work. The house, whose

mere foundation looked so ludicrously out of place in the last sketch, was now a completed structure. Its long, low front peeped modestly out below the oak-branches, presenting already a cosy air of comfort and seclusion that found attraction even for the worldly gaze that now so intently regarded it.

"But, Faith," at length exclaimed Mrs. Nymscywitch, opening her lips with a sort of gasp, so profound was her astonishment, "you naughty, treacherous child! Have you really done all this without a word?"

"I told you I had made my arrangements," began Faith.

"You've made them with a vengeance, I think. Why, the very ground is metamorphosed! Where is the bank in which one end of the foundation had buried its nose so uncomfortably?"

"I had that cut down as far as I could to fill in at the other corner. Then, in leveling the bank on the road in front, and making that flat space which the drive encircles, I found material enough for a very satisfactory grading around the house."

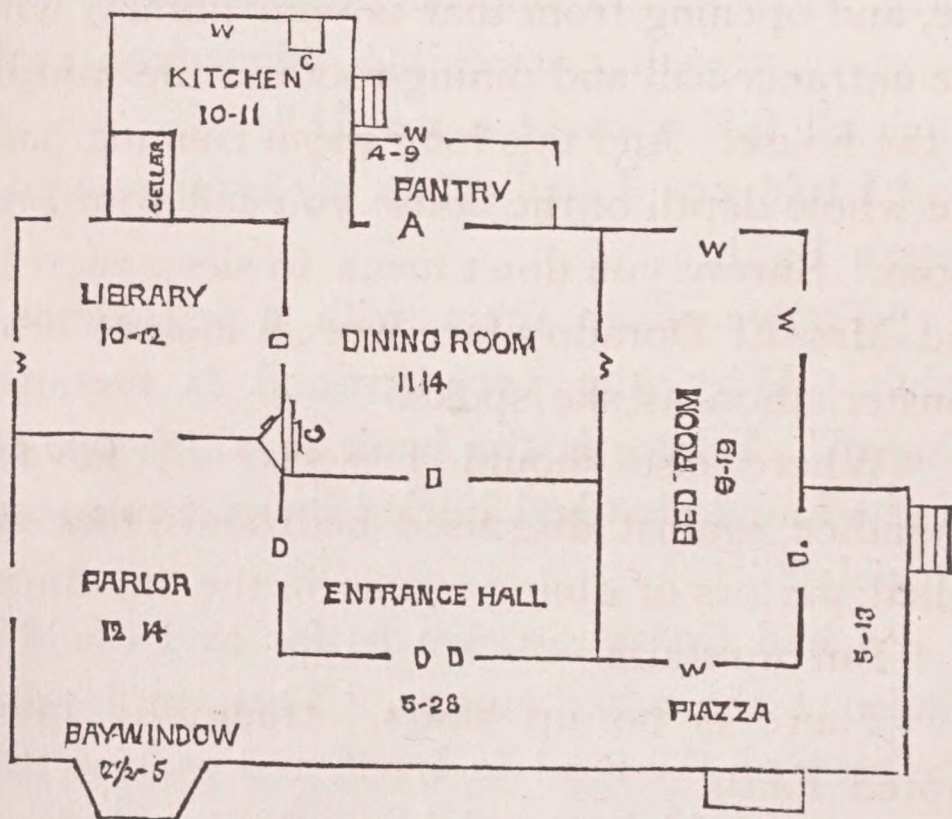
"But tell us about the house," interrupted

Mrs. El Dorado, eagerly. "It looks quite pretty there in the picture."

"It is just as pretty in reality," returned Faith. "Here is a plan of it, if you care to go into details."

"Of course we do! But is it really so large? Thirty-five feet is a broad frontage."

"It is only twenty-four feet deep," replied Faith. "You see, I could not sacrifice any of



GROUND PLAN.

A, arch ; D, doors ; D D, double doors ; W, windows ; C, chimnies.

my oak-trees, so I contrived a house that would just fit in among them."

"Well, let's see this wonderful plan," said Mrs. Nymscywitch. "I like the shape of the piazza very much, and that bay-window just saves it from looking like a district-school house."

"What a cruel speech!" exclaimed Faith, pretending to look indignant; but she knew her old friend too well not to detect her kindly approbation despite her words of criticism.

"The bay-window belongs to the parlor, I see, and opening from that is your library, with the entrance-hall and dining-room in the middle of the house. And this long room running back the whole depth of the house you call your bedroom. Surely you don't mean to sleep there!" and Mrs. El Dorado's face wore a look of utter consternation as she spoke.

"Where else should I sleep? I have a prejudice against disguised bedrooms, that are called parlors or dining-rooms in the day-time."

"But up-stairs—"

"There is no up-stairs," tranquilly interrupted Faith.

"No up-stairs! Why, what can you do?"

"You must remember this house was chiefly built with borrowed money," said Faith, gravely. "It is entirely unfinished overhead, al-

though it would only cost about two hundred dollars more to make three rooms there if they are ever wanted. But, you see, I can only sleep in one room at a time, and I prefer to use one on the first floor."

"But what if burglars came?"

"Then I'll be on the spot to protect my property. Half the time burglars escape while people are getting out their pistols and stumbling down-stairs in the dark after them."

"Imagine yourself chasing a burglar round with a pistol from one room to another!" cried Mrs. Nymscywitch, laughing till the tears ran down her cheeks, and yet glancing a little anxiously at Faith's unterrified aspect under the discussion.

"I hope I will succeed in keeping them outside," she said, simply. "But tell me how you like my kitchen and its arrangements. You see a door from the dining-room opens into it. By the time we got round to this side of the house we were so high up in the air that I had the kitchen started about four feet lower. So a little flight of steps leads down into it, and on one side an open stairway goes up to the servant's room overhead."

"You will need a very tiny servant in these little rooms. Only ten feet by eleven, isn't it?"

"Large enough for my needs," replied Faith, "and I have very little idea of having a servant at all, although I built the room in case I should find I wanted it."

"Then you do mean to starve in good earnest!" cried Mrs. El Dorado, holding up her hands in horror, while tears of kindly pity stood in her eyes.

"Not at all! I have come much nearer starving at tables that were overloaded with ill-cooked and uneatable food than I shall ever be when left to my own devices. I should be a rich woman this day if I had claimed a salary for teaching all the stupid servants whom I have drilled into fair cooks in the course of my existence."

"But to do it all yourself!" exclaimed Lady Disdain, with a virtuous sniff and an air of great distaste.

"It won't harm or weary me," replied Faith. "Come and see me when I get settled."

"And when will that be?"

"I shall move in to-morrow."

"To-morrow? But it doesn't look finished enough—"

"Oh, fences and gates are easily put up, and some little touches inside can be added better when I am there to know just what will suit me."

"Oh, you mad, foolish woman! Do give it up, even now! You can finish and rent it."

"I prefer to live in it," retorted Faith, firmly. "I expect to sleep there to-morrow night."

"Impossible!" all three cried in chorus.

"Not at all! Carpets are already down in my own room and the parlor. I have a tiny stove ready for the kitchen, and it will take but a few hours to put everything in temporary order."

"But what will you have for supper to-morrow night?" asked practical Mrs. Nymscy-witch.

"I shall take some fruit and sandwiches over for that occasion, and cook my first meal the next morning."

"And the wherewithal for your kitchen fire?"

"Is already provided. While the work of

building was going on, I found the workmen and my neighbors generally were kindly solicitous to help clear up my grounds by carrying off arms and baskets full of fragments and shavings; so I hired a boy at fifty cents a day to excavate a sort of cellar under the house near the kitchen-door, and to collect all these spoils for firewood. Thus, I have enough to last a year at a cost of about five dollars."

"Well, I'm coming over very soon to take breakfast with you!" said Mrs. El Dorado, rising to depart.

"It might be prudent to bring it with you," said Mrs. Nymscywitch, as she also rose.

"If we don't find you a wasted skeleton, it will be a comfort," observed Lady Disdain, lugubriously.

But Faith only laughed as she bid them good-by.

CHAPTER II.

PRACTICAL HOUSEKEEPING.

All the means of action—
The shapeless mass, the materials—
Lie everywhere about us. What we need
Is the celestial fire to change the flint
Into transparent crystal, bright and clear;
That fire is genius!—LONGFELLOW.

FAITH ARDEN moved into her house with somewhat unwise impetuosity, for she found the masons' labors but barely ended, and a faint damp odor of lime pervaded the greater part of the building, which warned her to use every caution in so hastily occupying it. Her own room, however, was fairly dry; and with utmost efforts she accomplished its arrangement for her use that night, and got the kitchen stove put up, besides hunting up a few articles she would need in getting breakfast the next morning. The parlor furniture had been hastily thrust in place, while the library and dining-

room were crowded with boxes, baskets, trunks, and other things for which as yet no place could be found.

Weary to the last degree with her unwonted exertions that long summer's day, yet triumphant over her success, and full of a keen sweet sense of content and restful peace, she watched the darkening sky as the twilight faded and the twinkling stars came out, seeming to smile in kindly encouragement upon her. Soon, knowing how early must be her rising in the morning, she retired to her room, wondering if any nervous sense of loneliness would indeed come over her in that utter solitude. But well-earned repose fell gently and at once upon her, weighing down her drooping eyelids with a dreamless sleep, in which midnight terrors had no place.

The carpenter, who still had many days of steady work before him in hanging sashes and blinds, as well as in putting finishing touches everywhere, was to come at seven o'clock; and Faith rose briskly at six, hoping to complete her kitchen labors before his arrival. Simply putting on a light wrapper and slippers, she hastened to light her fire and to put some water

in a saucepan on the stove. Having accomplished a bright blaze that flamed with a cheering roar and crackle up the chimney, Faith returned to her room to complete her toilet; and, after putting everything there in order, had the satisfaction, on again visiting the kitchen, of finding that the water was boiling merrily. In another moment, having ground some coffee, and put it in a little brown earthenware pipkin, she added enough of the hot water to make the quantity she wanted. She then stirred two heaping tablespoonfuls of oatmeal into the saucepan, and left both coffee and oatmeal to boil, while she arranged on a small stand in one corner of the dining-room such breakfast array as she could manage to find.

From the supply of food and groceries with which she had provided herself, Faith then obtained some rolls and butter, while from her pint of fresh milk, brought over the evening before by a brisk little farmer's maiden, she skimmed cream enough to make both oatmeal and coffee doubly palatable. It was only half-past six when she sat down to enjoy this first relay of food, which was succeeded presently by two fresh eggs, which had been cooking in

the mean time. It may seem a simple breakfast, but everything was so fresh and daintily prepared, each article the best of its kind, and coming so briskly from the fire to greet the keen, healthy appetite that awaited it, that it is to be doubted if any breakfast in the world has been much more enjoyed.

It was a struggle to find soap and towels among the wild disarray that reigned everywhere, and the dish-pan for some moments very obstinately hid itself. But they all came to light at last, and, with the fresh supply of boiling water that awaited her, Faith had everything washed and put out of the way while yet the carpenter's quick, active step was afar off.

He was a cheery, pleasant fellow, one who, instead of being any restraint on Faith's movements, could be called upon to help her whenever she found anything too heavy or bulky for her own strength.

Busily and blithely they both worked all that long day, Caspar intent on getting all the blinds in place to keep out the glaring sunlight, while Faith put down the carpet in the hall, and arranged the furniture there and in

the parlor, so as to make the reception of chance visitors more comfortable. She had planned and sewed the carpets in advance, having enough of a fine, neat ingrain that was still in good order to cover all the floors. As the inner doors would usually stand open, she fancied having the same carpet throughout, not liking the patchwork appearance that a variety would exhibit. Her parlor soon presented an aspect of some comfort. The piano, with a comfortable sofa, three easy-chairs, a round center-table, a small stand, and several ottomans furnished the room very fairly. In the hall were only a hat-stand and a small side-table, the blanks where two chairs ought to have been looking at Faith with very mournful grimness. For the dining-room there were as yet only a side-board, a buffet, a round stand, and one very plain cane-seated chair, while the library, still more unfortunate, could claim but a desk and narrow side-table. In Faith's own room an old-fashioned bedstead, with canopy and heavy curtains of crimson silk, trimmed with gold lace, held a conspicuous position, while a wardrobe, a wash-stand, and a bureau, with a rocking-chair, made up the sum of its furnishing. To

balance the blanks everywhere were the heaped-up boxes of books and music, the trunks full of clothing and house-linen, the baskets of china, silver, and glass, and the huge packages of pictures and mirrors that stared Faith desperately in the face, and for many of which she could find no place at all.

Some of them she consigned to temporary oblivion in the attic overhead, which was accessible from the servant's room by a few steps and a door, and where Caspar had made a rough flooring over part of it for this purpose. Others were piled up in the library, so that by noon the dining-room was comparatively cleared.

When Caspar had gone home for his dinner, Faith, glad of a moment's rest, and not caring to prepare an elaborate lunch, or to make up a fire again, found a shady corner of the piazza, where, with her simple array of crackers, cheese, some fruit, and a glass of milk spread on a chair beside her, she gained refreshment for both body and mind, while she studied out her next enterprises. She was already zealously tacking down the dining-room carpet when Caspar returned, and, when it was done,

having with his help put the side-board and buffet in place, she began to rejoice that the hardest part of her work was over for the day. Unaccustomed to such violent and continued exercise at any time, and, above all, in this glowing June weather, she was glad of a comparative rest while unpacking and arranging the silver and glass on the side-board, and hunting up the little china she owned. It was a wearisome task even then, for vases and lamps and ornaments of all sorts had been packed with the more useful articles, and must now be put aside again as they made their undesired appearance.

Even more gladly than on the previous day did Faith hail the warning whistle which proclaimed that Caspar's day's work was ended, and left her in the approaching coolness of evening to once more seek the kitchen's tiny domain. She was honestly hungry by this time, and had too much pride and confidence in her culinary skill to hesitate an instant over the preparation of her dinner. Having with practiced housewifely care made in advance all due arrangements for supplies, she now only needed to decide what to use. Everything was at hand,

and she could have got up quite a ceremonious meal had she chosen, but she wisely undertook only what was the least trouble. A piece of delicately broiled beefsteak, with some boiled rice, was all she cooked, making meanwhile a salad with some fresh lettuce, and preparing some peeled and sliced tomatoes with mayonnaise dressing. These, with a roll and a glass of wine, she arranged on the little table in the dining-room, and, after enjoying them with the hearty zest gained from her day's hard work, she took her dessert of ripe, glowing strawberries outside, and ate them leisurely under the cool shade of her magnificent oak-trees.

Then gathering together the array of her tiny dining-table, Faith put all aside in the kitchen, wisely concluding that once a day, after breakfast, was often enough for the rather distasteful process of washing them, which she did not at all fancy. Still, she performed even this task daintily, liking to have each article, as it was restored to its place in the dining-room, shine with a polished cleanliness such as few servants' hands ever bestow. Faith had some peculiar ways of performing this duty. She began with the knives, washing them, one

at a time, in the hottest of water, cleaning each with brickdust, and drying and polishing it quickly, so that it shone like new steel again. Then came the glass and silver, that must be clear and bright beyond compare, while the china and the kitchen utensils were not the less carefully attended to for their humbler claims. She used a swab rather than a dish-cloth, having a horror of putting her fingers in hot water, and often added only some borax to the water to make it soft enough for due cleansing.

The tiny stove did its work wonderfully, and with water from a pump close at hand within the kitchen, and a drain beside it to carry off all that was used, Faith's kitchen labors were not so very heavy. She found there was, indeed, no space to spare, although a table and a refrigerator were all the furniture of the room besides the stove and pump. However, Caspar made her a hanging safe out of some fragments of wood and a yard of wire-netting that triumphantly defied the innumerable ants who came so inquisitively through every crevice, seeming to be trying to find out what this new departure among their wonted haunts meant. Then, with a set of shelves fast-

ened against the wall over the table, and hooks in every direction—even under the steps that led up-stairs—Faith found opportunity to make quite a display of the few utensils she had, and to note dolefully the very many she must yet procure. She could manage very comfortably without them by herself, but the meekest, most unassuming servant that ever lived would have been rebellious under such restrictions.

The pump was an especial comfort to Faith. Of course, it was rather hopeless to look for a spring on that bleak rock, although she shrewdly suspected even that would some day be discovered. In the mean time rain-water ought to be pure enough, and would do for most uses, but how to have a cistern? Near the kitchen-door persistent digging had revealed a diminutive pocket in the rock that would hold a barrel, or perhaps two of water. As blasting was impracticable, and a good deal of filling-up necessary on the steep slope at that side of the house, Faith had a cistern constructed in the pocket, and built up above it to the level of the kitchen floor. Then, when the final grading was completed, this was entirely covered in, leaving a platform on top for venti-

lation. It was very easy to have the water led that short distance through a block-tin pipe into the kitchen to supply the pump.

Another experiment of Faith's had been to have a small cellar, of three by four feet in size, and four feet deep, made in one corner of the kitchen at the time its foundation was laid. Being constructed of bricks laid in cement, she believed it would be a cool place in summer for wines, vegetables, or other supplies, while in winter it would be an equally desirable refuge from frost, not only for these articles, but also for such tender plants as she might wish to keep through the cold months.

Thus in the humble sphere of the kitchen, with Caspar's ready help, Faith found each need quickly met, and soon its cosy comfort was very noticeable. But the greater wants of the main house, the recollection of those unpacked boxes and trunks above-stairs, filled her at moments with dire consternation.

CHAPTER III.

CULINARY SKILL.

Who does the best his circumstance allows,
Does well, acts nobly ; angels could no more.—YOUNG.

FAITH had found it at first a slight trial to rouse herself so early, but she was already falling into this excellent habit, and was up even before six the next morning, having a new enterprise on hand. This was to make biscuit, as she had exhausted her small supply of rolls ; and she felt somewhat uncertain whether the oven would be hot enough to bake them in due time. As soon as she had set her coffee and oatmeal merrily boiling, she took a large cup of flour, stirred into it thoroughly half a spoonful of baking-powder and a pinch of salt, and then added milk enough to make the mixture as stiff as she could stir it. Dividing this with two floured teaspoons into six portions which she then placed in a buttered pan, and finding to

her relief that the oven was quite hot, she left the biscuit to bake, while she prepared a hash from the fragments of rice and beefsteak that had been left from her dinner. Thus, almost as early as on the preceding day, she commenced her breakfast, the biscuit and hash being ready for her and smoking hot, by the time she had finished her oatmeal, and cream. Again, not having this time to seek for her dishpan and towels, she accomplished the task before Caspar arrived, although the accumulation of articles to be washed was so much greater than before. He glanced at her wonderingly more than once, as she wandered about the house rather disconsolately, surveying the dreary blanks where needful furniture was so conspicuously absent. Knowing that she must not infringe on her small income, and seeing how fast her little accumulation of ready money was melting away in meeting expenses that were imperative, Faith could only sigh and wish and regret, without hope of attaining the objects of her desires.

Caspar ventured at length to half question her as to the cause of her evident solicitude, and so elicited an expression of her wishes.

“Well!” he said, encouragingly, with his curious foreign accent, “why trouble over that? There are many fragments here that you have no use for; why not let me make what you want?”

“But could you?” she asked eagerly.

“Why not? I was brought up to be an upholsterer; and can make many things in that line. I will make you a book-case and easy-chair for your library; why not?”

“And all my other needs!” cried Faith, clasping her hands joyously. “I will show you—I will make drawings.”

“No! I can make them without drawings?” he said. “Let me finish first the molding round the door and window frames, and then, I will know what I have to use.”

Enchanted with this prospect, Faith busied herself at once in unpacking her pictures and mirrors, and in dusting and touching them up, which she found was requisite in many instances. Then, when Caspar had finished hanging the doors and windows in the parlor, and had added the delicate cherry-stained molding to the walnut frames, that contrasted so well with their sombre hue, she made him put up the

poles and brackets for her curtains and *portières*. These she also unpacked and got ready, so that they could be hung as fast as their places were made ready for them. With heavy *portières* of raw silk in the bay-window and in the doorways leading from the hall to the dining-room and parlor, and also between the parlor and library, these rooms already assumed an air of greater decoration. Then, being shy of mounting the step-ladder while Caspar was there, yet unwilling to take him from his work for anything she could do herself, Faith availed herself of his absence at dinner-time to venture upon that somewhat perilous undertaking. Having previously studied out their respective destinations, Faith soon had all her pictures and mirrors hung, whose placing in position now indicated a new want. The chimney being nearly in the center of the house, and triangular in shape, presented a flat side to the dining-room, while cutting off the corners of the parlor and library. Here mantels were needed both for use and ornament; and Faith, still seeking to obtain her wishes with due regard to economy, appealed to Caspar on his return to make these mantels for her out of some bits of board she had col-

lected for the purpose. Having among her odd stores some iron brackets that would do for their supports, this undertaking was quickly accomplished; and the mantels thus improvised were next ornamented by Faith's quick fingers with heavy *macramé* fringes, which were the handiwork of former days of busy idleness. Space now offered itself for many of the vases and other *bric-à-brac* that filled the boxes in the library; and altogether Faith felt, when evening came and she viewed one empty trunk and two baskets, besides some half-emptied boxes as the trophies of her day's work, that it amply repaid her for her unusual exertions. Her lunch had been got in rather a desultory fashion; but having some of the biscuit left that were made at breakfast, and some strawberries yet remaining of the basketful procured the day before, she enjoyed it very much, making a punch by adding some sherry to the glass of milk, whose proper proportions had been diminished by using part of it for the biscuit.

Faith decided, when Caspar departed at six o'clock, to work for another hour herself, as there were still nearly two hours of daylight, not only because it was cooler then, but many

little things could be done more independently in his absence. It seemed to puzzle him in an amusing way to see a woman attempt work that was often almost beyond her strength; and once, when Faith was lifting a door in her strong arms to put it in a different place, he stepped hastily to her aid, exclaiming:

“Stop! stop! you mustn’t do that.”

She had laughed, and let him help her then; but often afterward, when his back was turned, she had done far more difficult things.

That day, dining an hour later, brought her a wondrous appetite, and her veal chop, that had seemed large enough for two when the butcher brought it, might easily have weighed a few more ounces and still have been entirely consumed. With it she had some green peas and asparagus; and, with her glass of sherry, and some strawberries for dessert, she felt so refreshed that, but for the growing darkness, she would fain have gone to work again.

Faith was too cognizant of the importance of keeping up the health and strength, upon which her active labors made so severe a strain, to practice those absurd and more than useless economies of the table that so often disgrace

the homes of comparative affluence. She knew the wide difference between a sufficiency of nourishing, well-prepared food and the scarcely palatable waste that has neither the merit of healthfulness nor the advantage of inexpensiveness. Her tastes were simple, her skill as a cook beyond question. Thus each article that found place upon her table was perfect of its kind, but not necessarily the most costly. Her coffee was the very best the market could produce, but, being bought at wholesale in the city, cost less than the inferior article which the country stores contained. Kept closely packed and guarded from the air in tin cases, the quantity needed was ground at the moment of using, and being boiled for five minutes at the most in a close-covered earthenware pipkin, it retained its full fragrance and strength, and, with fresh cream, became a cup of refreshing and delight not to be surpassed. Faith would never use any metal utensil for making coffee, declaring she could always detect a flat metallic flavor about it.

So it was with all her cooking enterprises. Never frying chops or steaks, but always broiling them over a bright fire, and adding the salt

and pepper after taking them up, so as to preserve the flavor and juices, they were hot and savory to the utmost. Her biscuits were light and feathery, deliciously melting in the mouth, because they were daintily handled, being neither solid with too much working and rolling, nor made more substantial by the mistaken addition of butter. When she made cake or dessert, which she rarely did, not caring much for either, the same skillful touch revealed itself. For vegetables, especially those that required cooking, Faith cared but little; still, she knew how to prepare them so as to elicit their best qualities. She disliked to peel potatoes beyond all other kitchen duties. Thus they found no place in the beginning of her house-keeping; but, when new ones were in market, that could be washed only, and boiled or roasted "with their jackets on," then Faith would condescend to use them occasionally.

It was not easy to plan in advance the exact cost of each meal, but Faith carefully noted the quantity and cost of each item, that she might ultimately calculate whether she were exceeding her modest allowance. She noted that it took just one ounce of coffee for her breakfast,

and an ounce and a half of either oatmeal, hominy, or cracked wheat. Then, in the form of biscuit, rolls, or muffins, about six ounces of flour were used. Two eggs, boiled, poached on toast, or made into an omelet, or else a chop or a hash made from the remains of the previous dinner, or sometimes half a dozen fried oysters or a sweetbread or some liver, amply completed her breakfast, and varied the programme sufficiently.

Her lunch was always unceremonious. Especially during the summer months, she cared but little for food in the middle of the day, and supplies for that meal never entered into her calculations. There were always biscuit or muffins left from breakfast, and fruit or preserves at hand. Then, when an occasional spring chicken, after making two dinners, offered still some fragments already cooked, she would make a dainty salad of them with lettuce or tomatoes, and feel that she was feasting royally.

For her dinner in the evening, Faith was willing to take some trouble. It was her last task of housework, and she thoroughly enjoyed its preparation as well as its actual eating. With

a dozen oysters, she would make a soup of half, and broil the others, or fry them, after dipping each in beaten egg and cracker-crumbs. Then, her chop or broiled chicken would follow, with such vegetables as she had provided; and for dessert, fruit was always her preference. Nor were these courses troublesome to manage. Having everything in readiness, and her kitchen so few steps away, the broiled or fried oysters would cook while she was taking her soup, and the rest of the dinner was ready when she had finished the oysters. And never was she tempted to dine in the kitchen for the convenience of it, as many women would have done under like circumstances. No! Faith Arden had queened it royally in the world in her past day of social triumphs, and here, in the solitude of her lonely home, she maintained every observance of ceremony just as imperiously as though the world still looked on and applauded.

CHAPTER IV.

DEFT CONTRIVANCES.

One gains courage by showing himself poor ; in that manner one robs poverty of its sharpest sting.—THUMMEL.

SEVERAL days passed before Caspar was at leisure to make Faith's furniture, as it was necessary to finish first the molding throughout the house so as to know what would be left for its ornamentation. Meantime, Faith varied her other labors by collecting on the piazza the bits of board or plank that were scattered in every direction, and began to study the uses to which they could be put. Caspar laughed slyly to himself as he saw her, with knit brow and grave air, industriously measuring and calculating, as earnest and preoccupied as though a whole house was to be built from these fragments. But he was really surprised when he found how much her calculations simplified his labors. She only needed to point out the lines

she had drawn on a board that was sixteen feet long and fourteen inches wide to show him how it was to be divided lengthwise in two strips of six and eight inches in width. Then the widest would make the sides and top of the book-case, which was to be six feet high and four feet across. The other strip would make four shelves, which, being narrower, would admit of the added ornament of a cherry molding on the edges. Three more shelves were made from some small pieces of board that Faith had found, so that, being so well planned, the book-case was put together in a very short time. Caspar's ingenuity in adding various contrivances, from moldings of different styles, gave the whole an aspect of beauty and completeness that greatly delighted Faith. The combination of walnut and cherry was particularly effective; and when Faith had tacked some turkey-red on the back, and Caspar had carried it to the position in the library destined for it, Faith could scarcely find patience to wait till the varnish was dry before bringing her books down to put on the shelves.

Meantime, however, another somewhat similar task was ready for Caspar. A board of the

same dimensions as the first was cut into two lengths of five feet, and three of two feet each. These were to make the uprights, top, and two shelves of a linen-press for Faith's own room. Two more shelves were contrived from smaller pieces, and the whole elaborately ornamented with molding. A turkey-red back was also added, besides an embroidered linen *portière*, hung by brass rings on a pole, that was fastened on the edge of the overhanging top. This press Faith had measured so as to just fit between the outer door of her room and the front window; and she was eager to arrange on its shelves her stores of house-linen, and thus get rid of another trunk. But, as the drying of the varnish must again be waited for, she turned her thoughts to her next great need, asking Caspar if he could make her a dining-table.

"Why not?" he asked, in his quaint way. "I can make anything if you have the materials."

"Not everything!" said Faith, laughing, "I want a lounge for the dining-room too, and—"

"Oh! I've often made lounges," he replied, tranquilly. "It's just a frame you want, with

springs ; and a bit of carpet would do for a cover."

"But you must have hair to stuff it."

"No ! moss is just as good, and much cheaper," he said, cheerily.

"Well ! I'll send for some moss and the springs, and you can make the table meanwhile. I'll get some rollers, too ; enough for the table, lounge, and chair. You said you could make me a chair, didn't you ?"

"Oh, yes ! a chair is very easy. I will make all the frames now, and stain and varnish them, so they will be ready when the moss and springs come."

It was now Faith's turn to be astonished. A few pieces of heavy plank that had seemed of no use whatever, were quickly contrived by Caspar's skilled hands into the framework of both lounge and chair. Neatly and strongly put together, stained with the cherry stain, and varnished, they looked so promising of future comfort that Faith was in positive ecstasies over them.

But the table, that needed three broad pieces of board for the top and leaves, presented difficulties that seemed insuperable. Still, Faith's

fertile genius triumphed even here. The hall, having no windows, was gloomy, even though the inner doors usually stood open; and Faith had procured glass for the upper panels of the outer doors to secure the more cheerful aspect she desired. Having these panels now carefully removed and replaced by the glass, they made the leaves of the proposed table admirably, being unusually perfect, and scarcely half an inch thick. Then, recalling the thin back of an old picture, which having become warped had been discarded for a heavier back, Faith brought it forward as a possible top for the table. It was very thin, but beautifully veined; and by being glued upon some narrow pieces of board, and thoroughly planed, it made just the desired surface for the center of the table. This was now soon finished, Faith finding among her odds and ends some tiny brass hinges to fasten the leaves on with. The table, too, was cherry-stained and varnished; so that the piazza now presented quite an array of furniture in various stages of completion.

While Caspar resumed his regular work, and Faith flitted about restlessly, contemplating her new possessions, a carriage drove up to

the door, and Lady Disdain alighting, stood for an instant as though transfixed with astonishment at the scene.

Faith, after a dubious glance at her fingers with their inevitable cherry stains, while one disfiguring splash showed itself on her dress also, came quickly forward, however, to welcome her unexpected visitor.

“Have I been too impatient?” asked Lady Disdain, anxiously. “I was so eager to know how you were getting settled, so fearful of the many discomforts I know you must be enduring!”

“I am always glad to meet my friends,” said Faith, rather gravely, “and above all to relieve their anxiety about my welfare; but really, I don’t see any occasion for alarm as yet. I’ve had a delightful time so far.”

“Ah! but, my dear Faith, it is such utter madness! Can I not persuade you even yet to give up this foolish experiment?”

“But why should I?” she replied rather impatiently, “I am living a life of my own choosing, one that suits my tastes and wishes exactly.”

“But with such bitter privations; why you must almost starve—”

“Not at all!” and a flush of quick annoyance came over Faith’s countenance. “I am exceedingly comfortable, I assure you. But come in, and see my curious domain. You are nearly my first visitor.”

“Am I? Mrs. Nymscywitch was coming with me, but she was not quite well enough to ride so far, and made me promise to give her a faithful account of all your surroundings.”

“Be sure you do,” said Faith demurely, as she led the way; “don’t decry my poor little efforts at elegance, or whisper to that good heart your suspicions of the moldy crusts on which I am supposed to be barely maintaining existence.”

“But really, Faith—”

“Really, I do assure you, I only once found one of my rolls was moldy; and I didn’t eat it after all; I managed to find some crumbs on which to subsist till fresh supplies came. I always regretted the loss of that roll. It was my own fault, too, for leaving it in a damp place.”

Lady Disdain sighed, and forbore to continue the topic, having a dim idea that Faith was laughing at her, yet being too sincerely

grieved over her supposed privations to resent it.

"Tell me!" she said, looking about her eagerly as Faith conducted her from one room to another, and paused before the new book-case. "Is this something new? I don't remember it."

"It is so new that the sun has never yet set upon its beauty," replied Faith. "Caspar has been making it for me; and I am only waiting till it is dry, to put my books in it."

"Dear me! why it is really quite nicely done. Still it is not as pretty as one I saw in the city yesterday. That was a trifle larger and made of ebony. It was not so very expensive, considering the material. Why don't you take a look at it?"

"No, indeed!" interrupted Faith, "why the very trip to the city would cost more than this did."

"Impossible!"

"It is so, nevertheless. The cost of the material and of Caspar's time in making it do not amount to two dollars," returned Faith, bravely meeting the faintly supercilious air with which Lady Disdain was regarding her.

"Well! it seems to me," said Lady Disdain,

"I'd rather go without things, and make believe I didn't want them, than put up with home-made makeshifts that are a deliberate confession of poverty."

"Would you?" said Faith, quietly; but her eyes gleamed with sudden fire as she spoke. "Now, I never make believe anything. If I want a thing, I propose to have it, if there is any way of contriving to do so; and I am thoroughly proud of the genius that in spite of poverty, in actual harmony with it rather, can make out of mere nothings the objects it knows how to create."

"Dear me!" repeated Lady Disdain, looking somewhat disconcerted; "I didn't mean to offend you, Faith."

"You haven't!" answered Faith, more gently, feeling that only against a foe worthy of her steel was it worth while to brandish the weapon. "But don't think I mind being poor in mere money or money's worth. It's just a temporary inconvenience that doesn't trouble me at all."

"But why temporary? Have you prospects then—?"

"Temporary because my mind and soul

must certainly outlive it. A trouble whose influence can't reach beyond the grave is surely a trifling one."

"You're a queer creature!" responded Lady Disdain, looking very bewildered as she turned to the parlor and subsided helplessly on the sofa.

Faith pitied the poor soul's limited capacity to comprehend her wayward speeches, and, having a keen sense of the duty a guest's comfort imposes, she now sought to soothe Lady Disdain's perturbed sensibilities. In this she succeeded so admirably that when she rose to take her departure she was again all smiles and affability.

"Be sure to give Mrs. Nymscywitch a glowing account of my abode, and tell her to come as soon as possible to inspect it for herself," said Faith, cheerily, as she stood by the carriage-door, and aided Lady Disdain to duly arrange her voluminous draperies.

"At least, I won't tell her about the roll or the book-case," she replied genially.

"Are those the worst features you have been able to discover? Well, tell her, then, that I will make and send her sketches of each

room in the house as soon as I have got them more completely in order."

Lady Disdain looked back half regretfully as the carriage drove off, and Faith thoughtfully re-entered the house. Strong, patient, and courageous as she undoubtedly was, she could not help feeling a sense of vexation and depression as she recalled her visitor's foolish, ill-judged utterances. They were too trifling to have any real weight, yet they could sting sharply enough for the moment.

CHAPTER V.

TRIUMPHS OF ART.

'Tis much he dares,
And, to the dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor
To act in safety.—SHAKESPEARE.

WHILE awaiting the arrival of the springs and moss that were needed to finish the lounge and chair, Faith completed the inner decoration of the house by putting up red-linen shades in the windows, with curtains that were of lace for the parlor and library, and of cottage drapery for the dining-room and her own. It was curious how her fertile genius contrived to utilize all the relics of her former life, and to make each seem to have been planned for just this present use. Her pictures and ornaments, too, fitted each in its new position with all the harmony of design and coloring that the most careful study could have arranged.

Meanwhile Caspar was ever busy with the thousand and one details that make the finishing of a house take nearly as long as its original construction. Fastenings for doors, sashes and blinds to be neatly adjusted took time that seemed out of all proportion with the thing accomplished. The outside painting of the house, which he had also undertaken, being very much of a universal genius, he accomplished as weather and opportunity permitted, keeping the inside work for the many rainy days that followed upon July's first fervent heat.

Many bits of mending and renovating Caspar also satisfactorily performed, doing little touches of cabinet-work and dainty veneering that were not only a comfort to Faith in that they were done just at the moment of need, but because they cost, done by his hands, less than half what would otherwise have been the case.

So day by day the two industriously worked on, almost side by side, and the house took on new beauty each hour, till the completeness of its harmony and good taste fairly hid from notice the actual details, the half-worn ma-

terials, and touches of enforced economy. Then, the materials they had waited for having arrived, Caspar proceeded with his upholstering undertaking, working in the open air under the friendly shade of the noble oaks, while Faith sat near, watching the process with breathless interest.

“How easy it seems!” she exclaimed, as Caspar with his long needle skillfully stitched the moss firmly in place over the springs that had been already secured, by the aid of his queer-shaped upholsterer’s hammer, to the frame that seemed so strong and solid.

“Everything is easy when you know how to do it,” he replied, sententiously, as his fingers pulled the fine twine tightly through after each stitch, and finally tied all the ends with the wonderful knots that would not slip, which Faith could never master.

A raw-silk *portière*, like those already in use within, which had not been needed for that purpose, made a neat rich covering for both chair and lounge. The fragments that remained Faith quietly put aside, and the next rainy day contrived a round cushion, which she adjusted on the head of the lounge with some

bows of ribbon, giving it an added air of ease and comfort.

Can any one imagine the delight with which she now walked to and fro through the house, stopping to survey from every point of view her new acquisitions? She rejoiced in their inexpensiveness, as many another woman has been proud of the outlay of hundreds. She feasted on the outlines that had originated under her own supervision, and had been governed by her own fancy, far preferring them to those that came with dozens just like them, from the factory. The very piecing of the cover of her cushion she enjoyed, tracing the seams absently with her fingers, and observing how neatly they were sewed, how nicely she had matched the design. She took many unnecessary rests on the lounge when no one was by to notice the pretty folly of it, just to be sure it was comfortable, and the springs properly adjusted. The chair had been placed at her desk in the library, and of course was used whenever she had a letter to write, but many a time besides she would walk through the house to take a seat in it, professing to herself that she was tired,

or that it was so much cooler there than elsewhere.

Oh! how much less the rich and careless ones of earth would vaunt their cherished wealth. could they understand how many treasures the world contains that money can never purchase! Faith's lounge would have cost twenty or thirty dollars at an upholsterer's; the chair at least ten. Contrived as they were, they did not require an outlay of over five dollars for both. Yet to her own consciousness they far outweighed in value anything that could have been merely purchased. It was the joy of watching their rapid growth under Caspar's hands, of meeting each need with some fitting supply out of her little store of household odds and ends, which gave her a sense of independence that no wealth could have bestowed.

Now, carefully rearranging her rooms, Faith began, as opportunity permitted, to make the promised sketches for Mrs. Nymscywitch. The parlor and library were fairly complete, although many little improving touches could be added leisurely in the future. Besides a view of the parlor from the library-door, she

also gave one from the west window, which included an out-of-door glimpse through the narrow window on the piazza, that she especially liked.

So many interruptions occurred, and everyday duties claimed so large a portion of Faith's time and attention, that some days elapsed before she accomplished the sketches of the library taken from the dining-room, and of her own room from its outer doorway. There was also a delay of nearly a week, while Caspar was finishing the painting outside, and she was carefully reviewing every detail of her in-door arrangements, and calling upon him constantly for final bits of work here and there. All the woodwork in the kitchen and servant's room had to be painted, and some shelves put up in the latter. Then one of the round windows in the attic was made to open and shut at will, as it was intensely hot there in these sultry days.

Next came two weeks during which Caspar was called off for work on his own house, that could no longer be deferred, and Faith considered leisurely what else remained to be done. These delays resulted in one piece of good fortune. She had hesitated to make sketches

of the hall and dining-room where the dearth of chairs was so painfully conspicuous. While pondering this want, and wondering how she should meet it, she saw one day at an auction-room three very rough-looking chairs, whose cane-seats were badly broken. She had not watched Caspar's upholstering proceedings in vain, and, seeing a chance here that might be made available, she carelessly offered ten cents each for the chairs, supposing, at the worst, they were worth that much for kitchen use. To her surprise, the offer was accepted, and with great delight she found that a thorough scrubbing revealed strong, well-made oak frames, which were worthy of the ambitious plans she now formed for them.

Zealously imitating Caspar's more vigorous efforts, Faith contrived to arrange springs in each seat, to adjust what remained of moss around them, and to cover them with some bits of raw silk like that on her lounge. When she had administered a liberal coating of cherry stain and varnish to the chairs, all the bruises that had seemed so unsightly were entirely concealed, and they looked very well when placed in the hall and dining-room. It is

true they were very unusual in their appearance, but so were many other of Faith's unique contrivances, and the general harmony of all was not materially disturbed.

Now, with fresh zest, Faith resumed her sketching, and, in the comparative leisure of Caspar's absence, she finished them, including even the kitchen, servant's room, and attic. Sending them to Mrs. Nymscywitch, with an eager glowing account of all her busy, happy life, Faith earnestly entreated her friend to come quickly and see for herself how wonderfully her dreams had been realized, and, meantime, to believe implicitly in her utter peace and comfort.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW ENTERPRISES.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

TENNYSON.

AT a hundred odd moments during those long, bright summer days Faith would be flitting hither and thither over her wild domain, intent on studying its latent possibilities not only for improvement in aspect, but also for its increased usefulness. At the intervals when her light household duties, or the need to superintend Caspar's work, did not keep her in-doors, she was busy in the ambitious endeavor to make her grounds more closely approach a comparative level. From the slope of the higher ground in front of the house she took all that was possible of its material without uncovering the rocks to utter bareness. Using this for filling in on

the other sides of the house, a much more tranquil aspect was gained. The house no longer looked as if it would slip down the hill on the smallest provocation, but wore even an air of stability, as though conscious of the invincible protection the great oaks were capable of affording. Faith had ambitiously planted some flower-seeds in the earlier days of her sojourn here, which the rich soil had brought forward with unusual haste. From these, and from some house-plants that she had brought with her, she had now a modest array of bright-colored blossoms, which gave more of an expression of order and cultivation to the grounds than all her other efforts.

For some weeks there had been steadily progressing the heaviest part of her out-door work—that of removing the steep bank and masses of rock which so narrowed the road along the front. The noise of blasting the rocks into fragments, and their being dragged by oxen to fill in the road at the foot of the hill, had tried Faith's nerves severely, and she was glad when it was over. Just why oxen have to be yelled at so continuously, and addressed in such extraordinary terms, she never could

understand ; but, as driving them was one of the few things she could not do herself, she submitted as patiently and stoically as she could to the noise and discord.

When Caspar returned, he found a great change had thus been wrought in the aspect of the place as he approached it. The road had been lowered about two feet, and widened by the addition of at least six feet. This, at the same time, took off the sharp edge of the overhanging bank, which was now rounded back and made of an even height of about two feet above the road, whereas it had formerly been four or five feet above it in many places. His first task was to make a fence to protect the grounds, so much more exposed now, from the encroachments of street cattle. This Faith contrived should be as light as was consistent with its purpose, that the view should not be obstructed, and, with double gates at each entrance, another marked improvement was affected.

Then, gathering together odd fragments of siding, some lath left by the masons, and a few bits of timber and boards, Faith suggested a summer-house on the brow of the slope, where

a very beautiful view could be had in every direction.

“Not to cost much,” she said, anxiously, for she was beginning to have a terrible sinking at heart whenever she thought of the long roll of accounts she must some day look over and try to balance.

“No, that is easy to do,” said Caspar, reassuringly. “A summer-house should be rough and rustic, and that means cheap, too.”

And, in effect, it possessed thoroughly all three of these qualifications. Six slender cedar posts firmly fixed in the ground, with the bark appropriately left on, stood at the corners. A floor, hexagon in shape, and made literally of scraps, was managed from the odd bits of timber and some hemlock boards. A seat ran round five sides, inclosed in lattice-work, and the roof was made of the pieces of siding closely fitted together, and then painted bright red, which made it look from a distance like a huge umbrella. Considering that its materials would otherwise have been used for firewood, it was certainly inexpensive enough, using scarcely a day of Caspar's time.

Fortunately for Faith's fast narrowing re-

sources, Caspar had but a few more days' work to do after finishing the gates and fence. It was mostly little odds and ends everywhere of unfinished work that the masons or the tinker had overlooked or neglected. When, finally, all was done, Faith drew a long breath of relief, for the constant strain of so much anxiety over the cost, as well as the necessity of the work, had been very wearing, although she felt it most of all when it was ended. Yet she laughed as Caspar gathered up his tools for a final departure, saying she would probably be ready to pull the house to pieces and begin over again before the year was over. This Caspar took as a good joke, and so, indeed, she half meant it; yet she could see already changes that in the future she would like to make, which would be conducive to both comfort and convenience. He had not been gone, in truth, three days before Faith saw a new difficulty before her. The kitchen floor, of new, soft wood, showed every spot and stain, were it only from a splash of water. Scrubbing it herself was impossible, and yet it would often need it, while to hunt up some one who would undertake it would be more trouble than it

was worth. Then a new enterprise brightened Faith's eyes with fresh hope. She would paint the floors both of the kitchen and the servant's room with her own hands. Why not?—to use Caspar's favorite expression. Having watched him so often at the same work, she felt she could easily manage the paint-brush, and even mix the paint. With three cents' worth of yellow ochre, a sprinkling of Spanish brown, and half a gallon of oil, she accomplished a light coat of paint on the floors, which had the advantage over the usual process of being sufficiently absorbed by the wood to show its varied grain, and was the more enduring, as it would not readily scratch or wear off.

Faith did this bit of work secretly and in much fear and trembling, taking the early hours of the morning for it, when no one was likely to come, and even then locking all the doors carefully to prevent a surprise. She got her hands and even her face marked and splashed with the paint, but that was a trifle when she realized how well she had succeeded. Assured of this, she proudly proclaimed her new accomplishment, and exhibited its proof to every new-comer with delight.

Her visitors were, indeed, numerous and of all classes. Not even the tender anxiety of her old friends to be assured of her welfare surpassed the attentiveness of neighbors who were less personally interested. Every one, with more or less kindly motives, was eager to see all the curious features of her home, and to offer or seek advice in innumerable household questions. Petty disasters came sometimes to try her nerves and patience, but she had a ready ingenuity in finding remedies for each.

Once, just as her breakfast was ready, and she had taken up her pipkin of boiling coffee, an unexpected voice made her start and turn suddenly toward the door. Intending to put the coffee down as she did so, she miscalculated the space between her and the stove, and let go of the pipkin, only to hear it crash upon the floor. Not only was the fragrant coffee spilled and wasted, which her frugal soul was ready enough to lament, but, after answering the applicant, who came on some idle, vexatious errand, Faith found a tiny hole broken in the side of her favorite pipkin, the sight of which tried her courage and temper sorely.

She grimly took her breakfast without cof-

fee that time, as everything else was ready, but she cared more for the broken pipkin than the loss of a dozen breakfasts. She had had it so long that she had an affection for it, and it was not easy to replace it.

Faith was still ruefully making her little moan over this misfortune when a kind-hearted neighbor came in with a blithe greeting. Telling her dolefully of the injured pipkin, Faith tried to frown at the ominous gleam of merriment in the kindly eyes, only to join heartily herself in another moment in a good laugh at the accident that had so provoked her. It was a notable thing to Faith that it was from her visitor's fertility in expedients, rather than her own, that a remedy was found. Her suggestion of mending the break with plaster of Paris, mixed with water into a stiff paste, was attended with a perfect success. It hardened at once, fitting accurately into the fractured edges, and the pipkin was ready for use again in less than an hour.

These first days of solitude in which, having no longer any workmen to superintend, she was free to occupy herself according to the moment's caprice, gave Faith an impatient rest-

lessness that sent her wandering afresh amid all the odd nooks and corners that still remained untouched of her little property. In front alone, and immediately surrounding the house, had she accomplished a comparatively orderly pruning and grading. On the north and east, however, the wild luxuriance of Nature's handiwork still reigned. Huge rocks and precipices, half concealed by the dense undergrowth, peered threateningly forth in the most unexpected fashion, while at the foot of the slope a tiny stream trickled and babbled along over mossy pebbles, revealing here and there dainty water-cresses and the trembling ferns, that swayed gracefully with every breath of air.

Here Faith would scramble about for hours, getting her feet wet and her dress wofully torn and disordered, but enjoying with keen zest this little breathing-space between so many weeks of hard work and the renewed efforts which she knew were still before her.

CHAPTER VII.

FACTS AND FIGURES.

O polished perturbation ! golden care !
That keepst the ports of slumber open wide
To many a watchful night.—SHAKESPEARE.

AND now the dread first day of October had arrived, on which Faith had appointed to herself to make a statement of her accounts for the three months which had passed since she had commenced her novel experiment in house-keeping. All her items of every sort of expenditure had been carefully noted down to the smallest particulars ; and at this crisis, in which she could form a pretty clear idea of her success, if it were not indeed an utter failure instead, she fairly trembled as she sat down to commence her calculations. She began by classifying her accounts ; making one statement of the cost of buying and improving her grounds and of building the house ; another of pur-

chases to complete its furnishing; a third of household supplies for actual consumption; and a fourth, at thought of which her lips wore an uncertain, piteous smile, was to give her outlay for personal needs in the way of dress.

The first step had been the purchase of the land:

The original acre of rocks cost.....	\$250 00
An adjoining bit, bought afterward as desirable for the sake of including all the east slope to the stream...	25 00
The bricks for the foundation and chimneys cost.....	44 00
Drawing the same from yard, and other teaming of ma- son's supplies.....	37 90
Lumber and lime.....	415 00
Mason's bill.....	119 50
Carpenter's bill.....	205 75
Doors, windows, sashes, and blinds.....	131 50
Locks, hinges, nails, etc.....	29 87
Paint and oil.....	21 70
Tinner's bill.....	47 81
Molding, piazza posts, fence strips, brackets, etc.....	35 00
Insurance.....	4 50
Grading, blasting rocks, and clearing ground.....	76 55
	<hr/>
	\$1,444 08

This sadly exceeded Faith's first estimate of the cost of her proposed home, and nearly exhausted her slender supply of ready money. With the aid of a loan of \$700, for which she gave a mortgage, she contrived the payment of

each bill, however, grimly resolving next time she built a house to profit by her present doleful experiences. She had seen many points where mistakes had been made, owing to the blundering, willful or otherwise as it might be, of the workmen, and the evil had to be remedied of course, at her expense. She had seen much reckless waste and mismanagement, much spoiling of good materials, many an hour idled away in wrangling and arguing, all to her loss. Had she been a man, and so could have superintended the work day by day, many dollars might have been saved. If there ever was a "next time," she was quite inclined to make a sort of frolic of it ostensibly, and, sitting under a tree with a book or some work for nominal occupation, to watch every step closely and sharply.

Meantime, she could only make a virtue of necessity, and pay her bills soberly, with a rare word or two of commendation for the few who had served her faithfully; and in a grim silence that boded no good to the delinquents in the future, for those whose short comings, or actual dishonesty she saw with perfect distinctness. By actions rather than by words or idle dis-

putting over items, would she some day show her sense of the advantage now taken of her, and to which she seemed to submit so uncomplainingly.

The friend who lent the \$700 which enabled her to pay all these sums, was also considerate enough to fix the interest at five per cent, and to give her the privilege of paying off the principal in such installments as she should find practicable.

The interest on the mortgage, with the taxes, which were about ten dollars, made what was equivalent to a yearly rental of forty-five dollars.

Faith had a sufficient store of house-linen, in fairly good order, brought from the old homestead to meet all her requirements for the present. Of silver, china, and glass, she also had nearly all she needed; and of utensils for kitchen use, as long as she had no servant to arbitrarily demand greater conveniences, what she had needed but slight additions.

Thus her statement of purchases for such purposes during these three months was quite brief. These were:

A dozen of small dishes and plates.....	\$1 75
A door-mat, broom, dust-pan, and brush.....	1 15
Stove and furniture polish, with brushes, etc....	55
Hatchet, trowel, rake, saw, and small tools.....	1 80
Three chairs, moss, gimp and rollers.....	3 75
Broiler, kitchen towels and dish.....	45
Piano-tuning, house-cleaning, and grass-seed.....	5 80
	<hr/>
	\$15 25

Faith did not feel quite sure, as she contemplated these two accounts, whether the grass-seed ought not to have been put in the first statement, and the piano-tuning and house-cleaning reserved for the next. Still, it was such a novel and perplexing affair to her experience, that she concluded to let it stand as it was, especially as the making of the lounge, table, and other things had been included in the carpenter's bill, and part of the materials came indefinitely somewhere in those for lumber and moldings, to say nothing of the paint and varnish used.

"It doesn't make *much* difference," she soliloquized, "as long as all the money to pay for them comes out of one pocket."

The third statement took much longer to write out, as it included the many trifling details that had made up the sum of her daily expenses. The one especial joy to her palate of the whole day was her coffee for breakfast; and

Faith placed that article, with some dainty pen flourishes at the head of her list; not giving one sigh of regret to the fact that two pounds of coffee a month is a very liberal allowance for one person's actual consumption.

The account stood as follows:

Six pounds of coffee.....	\$1 50
Two pounds of oatmeal.....	30
Four pounds of wheat-germs.....	60
One pound of hominy.....	5
Forty-six quarts of milk.....	2 30
Seventeen pounds of beef, thirteen pounds of veal, seven pounds of lamb, six pounds of chicken, two pounds of liver.....	8 15
Thirty oysters.....	30
Six dozen eggs.....	1 50
Twelve pounds of butter.....	3 00
One gallon of California sherry.....	3 00
Twenty-five pounds of flour.....	75
Twelve baskets of small fruits.....	1 20
Two half-baskets of peaches.....	1 25
Seven pounds of sugar.....	48
Rolls.....	45
Vegetables.....	2 35
Firewood.....	50
Washing and ironing.....	6 00
Kerosene, matches, bath-brick, sapolio.....	65
Baking-powder, salt.....	30
Pepper, oil, mustard, vinegar.....	45
Pears, grapes, and apples.....	65
Crackers, cheese.....	37
Rice.....	10
Soap.....	5
	<hr/>
	\$36 25

There were, of course, among these a few items, such as condiments and matches, of which the unused portions would slightly lessen the next three months' expenses. But Faith shook her head drearily over the sum total.

"It never will do!" she murmured, disconsolately. "I shall soon need coal for steady fires through the winter, and in the long evenings will be at twice or thrice the expense of light than has been necessary hitherto. How shall I economize further? I can not do without my wine. Even if I used ale instead, it would cost nearly as much. One thing may be possible. With the help of the little pockets of rich soil around me, I may need to buy no fruits next year. I will plant trees and vines at once, and so meet that difficulty; but I don't see any other way of saving, unless I do my own washing; and really that *isn't* possible. Oh! for some bright Yankee to invent a machine for laundry work! It would be far more valuable than a sewing-machine. A lady *can* do her sewing herself, but not her washing. And yet, why not? wherein has she less ability than a servant? Are not the bones and muscles of her hands the same? Isn't it pure imagination

and conventional nonsense that draws this ridiculous line?

Then, with slightly flagging zeal, Faith began to look for items of personal expense among her memoranda.

“Ah!” she breathed, after a long inspiration of relief. “This is better”:

There were:

Two pieces of tape.....	\$ 14
One pair of slippers.....	1 00
One skein of knitting worsted.....	20
One pair of silk gloves.....	45
	<hr/>
	\$1 79

“Now that is respectable!” said Faith, regarding the figures triumphantly. “That makes amends for the other discouragements. Now let’s see how I stand financially,” taking a fresh sheet of paper and noting down the items.

Three months’ income.....	\$75 00
Taxes and interest (three months).....	\$11 25
House-furnishing (three months).....	15 25
House-keeping (three months).....	36 25
Personal expenses (three months).....	1 79
	<hr/>
	64 54
	<hr/>
	\$10 46

“Then I have \$10.46 toward paying off the mortgage!” reflected Faith, “Well! I am glad there is any balance at all, under the circum-

stances ; and as I probably won't have any kitchen furnishing to do for some time, what I save there will more than pay for my coal."

Among her goods and chattels Faith had stoves for each side of her triangular chimney. In the library, she now had the smallest one put up, which was an air-tight for burning wood. As the inner doors of the house always stood open, this stove for several weeks gave warmth enough for those early fall days, which were warm and genial enough when the sun shone, and a fire was only needed in the chilly mornings and evenings, or on occasional stormy days. For this Faith found she could use many rough, heavy bits of wood that were too large for the kitchen stove ; and a heap of gnarled branches and knotty roots which she had amused herself in collecting, principally to get them out of the way, were also satisfactorily turned to account and got rid of most usefully.

Then, as it grew colder, an open Franklin that would burn either wood or coal, was placed in the dining-room, where gradually a steady fire became necessary. A larger stove, with a grate that was open or closed at will, and which

was also a powerful double heater, was put up in the parlor, ready for the arrival of one of those sudden cold snaps that usually take the world so terribly unawares.

Then, with two tons of coal, Faith began her winter's campaign, which at a cost of \$5.75 a ton would not be too heavy an outlay, if it only kept her comfortable till the end of the second three months.

The dining-room window seemed rather bleak and exposed to the wind, and never at that season caught a glimpse even of sunshine; so Faith ordered for it an additional inside sash. On its arrival, however, after the usual three or four weeks' delay, she concluded it would do her more good in the parlor, whose one west window was very much exposed and which, on account of the needed sunlight, she could not shut up with heavy curtains as conveniently as she could the dining-room window. The library fire became of less need after the one in the dining-room was kept up regularly; and Faith concluded she could do very well without the library itself in the winter, as it was an especially cold room with its northwestern exposure. Removing what she needed of the contents of

her desk, and arranging them on a table in the parlor, by her favorite little window that overlooked the piazza, she now closed the library doors till spring should bid them open again with the leaves and flowers.

The next step was to bring in her plants, and arrange them in the bay-window. Faith was very fond of having as bright an array of these in the winter as possible. While admitting that they required as much care and anxious consideration as half a dozen children, she always maintained that they—the plants—were far more amusing. They were certainly never noisy or disobedient, and their due flowering, their bright healthful aspect could be fairly well counted on. It was at least her fault, not theirs, if they went wrong or met with disaster or damage of any kind.

CHAPTER VIII.

MAKING GARDENS AND MUFFINS.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

LONGFELLOW.

FAITH now undertook the last task of any magnitude which needed to be accomplished before cold weather came. The briers and underbrush, not only around the house but also in front and on the west side of it, had been thoroughly uprooted and cleared away in the early part of the summer ; but the earth thus uptorn, and the collection, during centuries perhaps, of leaves, decayed branches, and all the usual *débris* of forest growth, made a surface that needed to be laboriously raked over and smoothed. Faith was resolved against employing any more workmen if it could possibly be helped. She therefore resolved at least to try if this piece of

work could not be performed by her own active hands, knowing that she could do a little at a time if she found it very hard, and feeling anxious not to incur any outlay that could be avoided,

Raking up the great mass of rubbish in heaps, Faith carried it off in baskets to the edge of the western precipice, where she threw it over in great glee at the new ground she was thus making at its foot. But she soon found it a very wearying task, and felt she was overtaxing her strength seriously. It might have been less of a strain could she have been content to work for only an hour or so at a time; but in her ardent zeal to complete it, its very distastefulness making her the more eager to get it done, she worked often nearly all through the long golden days, whose grateful coolness stimulated her efforts and made such persistency possible.

When the first raking was done, Faith had to go over the ground with a hoe, smoothing down the greater irregularities, and pulling up some obstinate weeds and roots that had defied the rake's insinuations that they were objectionable. Then another more gentle raking of

the comparatively smooth ground, after sowing grass-seed everywhere except on the west side, ended the first stage of Faith's attempt at landscape gardening.

She took a few days' rest then, for she was very weary with it all. Her arms and back ached sorely with her violent exercise, and the tips of her fingers were blistered from contact with the rich, humid earth, that was overcharged with the alkali produced by the decayed vegetation. Then, being bountifully supplied with vines and plants from her friends' gardens, especially those of the Rectory and Boscobel, Faith forgot all fatigue in the rare delight of arranging her fruits and shrubbery.

Her great profusion of rose-bushes, lilacs, hawthorns, magnolias, syringas, peonies, and many other flowering shrubs, Faith scattered here and there with charming irregularity; while the honeysuckles, climbing roses, and other vines, she placed where she could train them either along the piazza, by the bay-window, or over the summer-house. Having left for shade all large trees, and some smaller ones such as dogwoods, bay-berries, and a few young hickory-nut trees, Faith did not attempt on the west

side, which she proposed to devote to fruits, any regular arrangement of them in beds or rows. With her strawberry-plants in little patches, and her currant-bushes and raspberry and blackberry vines scattered in groups here and there, wherever there was an open space, she concluded they would do well enough for a beginning. When they grew larger and needed more room, it would be time enough to cut away such trees as should prove to be superfluous. In the same way she planted a variety of grape-vines near some rocks, over which she would one day train them on a trellis into an arbor, for which the rocks would make a natural seat.

There was a beautiful view just here; and Faith looked forward very gladly, in all her present fatigue, to the days when she might sit there and rest, or eat grapes, as she pleased. A Seckel-pear tree, that would be in bearing next year, was her crowning joy. She watched its being planted—for it was her one acquisition that was too large for her to plant herself—in delight, wholly ignoring the fine drizzling rain that was so liberally besprinkling her. Its beneficial effect on the pear-tree was far more

important in her eyes at that moment, than its possible damaging of health or shoes to herself.

Afterward, she ventured on one investment for her fruit grounds, by buying two peach and two apple trees, which she planted one bitter cold afternoon. It was her last effort in this direction, as there were now too often heavy frosts at night to make the transplanting of any trees at all safe. Still, this all made a promising beginning; and Faith was greatly elated at thought of the supply of fruits for the next year, which would be doubly delightful, not only for having been gathered by herself, but because they would involve no expenditure. She even had a tiny persimmon-tree, given her rather romantically one Sunday afternoon, while taking a stroll among the deserted wreck of what was once a handsome place, but now a scene of utter desolation. Whether her life was likely to endure till she should gather persimmons from it, she did not stop to consider.

A bright, cheery letter from Mrs. Nymscywitch thanking her for the sketches which gave so pleasant a notion of her cosy home, but still deferring for a little coming to see her in person, rather disappointed Faith at this time.

Now that there was little to do to her house, beyond adding dainty touches at such odd moments as she should feel inclined to devote herself to them, she was more impatient than ever to have her trusty friend behold what she considered the perfection of her home.

Mrs. Nymscywitch had added as a postscript to her letter :

“By-the-way, how do you make those muffins you write about so glibly? I am shrewdly suspicious that they exist only in your fertile imagination; and are talked of now and then to deceive your tender-hearted friends into believing you eat them. I’m sure Lady Disdain thinks so. And those desserts, made with one egg, forsooth! just give me a few formulas for them. I should call that *light* housekeeping with a vengeance.”

“How do I make muffins?” wrote Faith in reply, having first decorated the top of her sheet of paper with a pen-and-ink sketch of herself, in a white apron that covered her from head to foot, as she stood over a stove, brandishing a huge spoon in one hand and holding a bowl of corresponding size in the other. “Well! if I told you the literal truth, I would say, ‘I take

some flour and baking-powder and salt and milk and mix them up, and cook them.' But you want everything measured, I suppose, which is a thing I never do. To a large cup of flour, a small teaspoonful of baking-powder and a pinch of salt would be about right. Mix them dry, then add milk enough to make a stiff batter, and drop it by spoonfuls in a pan of melted butter. *I* don't use rings, because if I did I should be sure, when I went to turn them, to land them on the floor or in the wood-basket. Besides, they bake quicker without. How to eat them is the point of real importance. Pull them open with your fingers, instead of making them heavy by cutting with a knife, butter them liberally, and eat them at once. Then, if you have any left, put them away buttered; and when you want them toast them till brown and crisp and hot, butter them *again*, and see if you ever tasted anything better in your life.

"As for my desserts, about which you ask so sceptically, they are real and good, as I undertake all my culinary achievements shall be. Wonders can be done with an egg in skilled hands. For instance, one, beaten well, and added with a little sugar to a cup of milk, poured

into a buttered dish, with some grated nutmeg on the top, and baked fifteen minutes, makes the dear old-fashioned custard we so loved in our younger days. I have two lovely little white pudding-dishes which hold each a half-pint that I find very convenient for these uses. Another triumph is to add an egg to a cup of milk and one of flour, which fills both my pudding-dishes, and bake for twenty minutes. I eat one hot with wine sauce for my dessert the first day, and find the other very good for lunch, cold with butter; or else I heat it for dessert again.

“Then, an egg can do good execution joined to half a cup of milk and half a cup of bread or cracker crumbs. This is also to be eaten hot, with wine sauce. I have lots of crumbs, as the last dry crusts of my bread are always turned into this useful condition. They are usually dry enough; but if not, I dry them in the oven before rolling them.

“This last formula is susceptible of numerous variations. You can add some sugar and either raisins, citron, or in fact any fruit you please. In summer, any kind of berries are delicious used this way. So are peaches and apples.

Huckleberries are the best of all. By-the-way, I am almost overcome with delight from finding some huckleberry-bushes on my own noble domain. It is really wonderful how rich in resources this heap of rocks is proving. I have even seen what looks dimly like the entrance of a cave. Just suppose I should find Captain Kidd's treasures concealed here!"

Thus merrily Faith responded to Mrs. Nymscwitch's earnest friendliness, making ever the best of things, determined to see and exhibit only the bright side of each event in her novel life. An experiment it still was; but if a strong will, a zealous perseverance through every trial, and a naturally cheerful temperament could control success, her day of well-won, hardly earned triumph, however delayed it might be, would surely come at last.

CHAPTER IX.

FESTIVITY.

A celestial harmony
Of likely hearts . . .
Which join together in sweet sympathy,
To work each others' joy and true content.

SPENSER.

WHILE yet October's golden glory clothed the earth in richest colors of autumn's foliage, Faith conceived the ambition of giving an afternoon reception. All her friends and neighbors had been so attentive, not only in frequently calling on her, but in urging her acceptance of their many invitations, that she felt some acknowledgement of their kindness was imperative. It needed not be an extravagance, she considered. By still maintaining her sturdy independence of domestic aid, the mere cost of giving her guests coffee, cake, fruit, and punch would be very little. In her usual practical way, she studied out all the details in advance.

For perhaps twenty-five persons, the coffee, with the cream and sugar would cost about forty cents. Sponge and citron cake made by her own hands would involve an expenditure in materials to the value of sixty cents. Fifty cents' worth of grapes, pears, and oranges would be sufficient to fill her fruit-baskets admirably; and the bottle of claret, with sugar and half a dozen lemons for punch, would cost as much more.

So Faith went merrily to work; her open heart rejoicing too sincerely in the pleasure of receiving her friends to regard her preparations for their entertainment as other than an added enjoyment. It was but a morning's work to make her cake; while a few hours on the day of the reception sufficed to dust and arrange her always neat house, and to prepare the dining-room table with all her bright array of silver, glass, and china. Then, with everything ready in the kitchen for making the coffee when the proper moment should arrive, Faith, many minutes before they arrived, was all smiles and eagerness to welcome her guests. A gorgeous array of bright colored dahlias, marigolds, and crysanthemums, which had been sent to her in

advance, she used to gayly decorate the rooms, mingling with them sprays of her own graceful ferns and rich hued oak and sumach leaves.

It was a delightful success! The novelty of Faith's curiously arranged house and her independent notions of housekeeping formed still the one piquant sensation in the neighborhood; and a pleasant, gentle-toned excitement pervaded the assembly as they wandered from room to room, eagerly admiring, or indulgently criticising every detail. Some of them ventured upon invading the dining-room, daringly inspecting in advance the perfectly appointed table, where the blended fragrance of flowers, fruit, cake, and punch saluted them with delicious suggestions of coming enjoyment. Even the kitchen was not safe from intrusion. Faith followed them, pretending to scold, and declaring they had frightened her modest domestic away with their clamor. They retired reluctantly, vowing they would return and watch the process of the coffee-making, by-and-by. They forgot all about it, however, when the time came, and were listening to some sprightly music in the parlor, when Faith slipped away for the moment's task of pouring the boiling water over the coffee. Re-

turning then demurely to the parlor, she sat down and played an old-fashioned jig, on finishing which, she again slipped into the kitchen.

Almost before she was missed she had poured the smoking coffee, clear as amber and deliciously fragrant, into her silver urn, and placed it on the dining-room table. Then, throwing open the door with an air of mock ceremony, she welcomed the eager entrance that scarcely awaited her words of invitation.

How blithe and happy they all were! Faith had a curious charm of manner that warmed the hearts of her guests with the sweet consciousness of being truly welcome, of conferring as well as receiving pleasure. There was no stiffness or formality anywhere. All were good friends, all loved Faith dearly; how could ceremony be permitted to chill their accord, or unduly restrain their always decorous merriment! And as they knew how Faith's own hands had wrought all these dainty confections, how pleasantly their words of praise fell upon her heart!

"Above all, you must tell me, Faith, how you make your sponge-cake!" cried one, while a chorus at once took up the request, and urgently repeated it.

"It would be of no avail," she said, laughingly. "You would never take the trouble to observe the directions accurately, and then you would blame me for your dismal failure."

"Indeed we will! just try us!" they cried.

"Well! you'll be sure to forget the most important particulars, so I'll not really risk preserving my pre-eminence of success. First, you must have a dozen eggs, all as nearly as possible of the same size."

"Is that important?" queried one incredulously.

"Extremely so. Then, being careful that neither sugar nor flour is in the least damp, take the *exact* weight of ten of the eggs in granulated sugar and the *exact* weight of six of the eggs in flour."

"How *exact* you are!"

"That is the most imperative necessity of all," went on Faith gravely. "Then put the sugar in a large bowl, with a teaspoonful of vanilla flavoring. Add the yolks of your eggs, and have one person to beat this mixture briskly with a wooden spoon till it is very light, while another beats the whites in a separate rather shallow dish with a silver fork."

"Which did *you* do?" asked somebody, so quizzically that all laughed at Faith's apparent dilemma.

"Don't interrupt me!" she observed severely. "I want especially to impress upon your minds that one of those vile egg-beating machines must not be used."

"But it's so much easier!"

"It's always easier to spoil things than to make them as they ought to be. Now, where was I?—oh! Then put the two together, beat thoroughly, adding the flour last of all, which must be gently mixed in, without any more beating. Pour this into shallow pans lined with buttered paper, and bake about twenty minutes."

"Suppose it isn't done then?"

"It ought to be. You can always find out with a whisk from the broom, or a straw."

"I don't believe any one else could make it taste like this!" taking another piece with a contented sigh.

"No! Faith's touch gives it a flavor—"

"Not of earth and weeds, I hope!" cried Faith, coloring with pleasure at her friends' kindly praise.

“Perhaps it is! But it’s good, whatever it may be.”

Faith knew her little entertainment was simple and unpretending enough; and that the zest with which her friends so genuinely enjoyed it came from the impulse of truly loving hearts; and this sense thrilled her own with grateful gladness. Her friends presently strolled once more over the house, and out upon the piazza, which the rising moon was flooding with silver light.

“Ah, Faith!” they cried at parting, “we pitied you, here by yourself all alone; we bewailed your foolishness in seeking such seclusion; but, after all, what a lovely home you have! How happy you seem to be!”

Faith smiled as she bade one after another good-night. She stood some moments looking after them, as the carriages rolled rapidly away, and fell into a deep reverie. Then she turned and re-entered the house. A reaction that was almost painful came over her as she looked at the scene before her. The piano was open, with loose music lying everywhere; not a chair, not a book was in its usual place, while the dining-room disarray was truly discouraging.

It was Faith's first exhibition of weakness that she left everything untouched till the next morning. She rested for an hour in silent retrospection of her pleasant day, and then retired to her room very much earlier than usual.

CHAPTER X.

DAYS OF ILLNESS.

Labor is life ! 'tis the still water faileth ;
Idleness ever despaireth, bewaileth ;
Keep the watch wound, or the dark rust assaileth.

FRANCES S. OSGOOD.

To many less warm-hearted women the work of washing up and rearranging the disordered array on the dining-room table, and of again adjusting the displaced furniture, would have been a piece of simple drudgery, especially when left to be done, as it were in cold blood, the next morning. But Faith went at the task even merrily. She crooned to herself the while her favorite old-fashioned songs, which were associated to her with just such work. In the olden time, while her mother, who clung to this custom all her life, would be leisurely washing and arranging her tea-things in the soft summer twilight, Faith could walk up and down the

piazza, past the open dining-room windows, singing in her clear young voice the same old tunes. It was the only help her mother wanted ; and this, she always said, made her task a very bright, cheery one. Often since, Faith, as now, would sing while at work about the house, and fancy her mother still was listening to the airs that brought back her memory with such sweet sadness.

There came within a few days one of winter's briskest breezes, rushing the thermometer down not far from zero, during one night. The first shock of it, coming while Faith's strength, after so much exertion, was not quite re-established, and compelling her to sudden inaction within doors, shook her rudely, and suggested the incipient suspicion that her house-work in extreme weather would be too much for her. Yielding to this fear, joined to the constant urging of her friends, she concluded to try a partial concession to their wishes. Engaging a young girl to come to the house for a few hours every morning, intending to give her various pieces of scrubbing and cleaning to do on the days when she was not washing and ironing, Faith took refuge in her books and work, and

waited the result with very doubtful expectation.

It was dreary and disheartening in the extreme. Obligated to rise earlier than usual to admit the damsel, and finding it a far more laborious task to show her over and over again just how to prepare the breakfast than to have done it herself, Faith sighed in secret for her former independence, and her resolve to regain it strengthened every day. Exactly where the difference lay she could not see, but the girl's clumsy efforts fell far short of Faith's own success in giving the meal the dainty freshness she loved.

Then the washing of the whole paraphernalia of kitchen and dining-room uses was so inferior. With much splashing of hot water and great waste of soap, while brick-dust and dish-water marked the white walls sadly, nothing possessed the smooth gloss that Faith always took such pride in; and the knives became dull and lusterless for want of proper polishing.

One day Maryanne was set to wash windows; and this Faith found a still greater trial. At one moment it was:

"Please ma'am, here's a sash won't come down."

Patiently Faith would put down her work, and reduce the refractory sash to submission. Just as she had found her needle again, and ascertained where she had left off, it was:

"Please ma'am, I've dropped my dry towel in the water. Will you give me another?"

Silently, but in growing rebellion, Faith gave her the desired article. Then, stopping to throw open another window and to see that its sashes moved easily, she returned to her work, confident this time of being undisturbed for half an hour at least.

Vain hope! Again Maryanne's monotone sounded in her ears.

"Please ma'am, it's eleven o'clock, and I must go home to get my brother's dinner ready."

The second window had not been touched; and Faith had the consolation of washing it herself, after the girl was gone, doing it of course in half the time that Maryanne would have taken, and twice as well.

So it went on for a week, and Faith's nerves were all on edge with the worry of seeing everything in disarray, and of following Maryanne

wearily around trying to show her what to do. It was far more fatiguing to look on at her stupid dragging movements, than it would have been to have performed the same task herself. As the second week progressed, Faith's endurance was at its last gasp, and she was screwing up her courage to dismiss Maryanne as impracticable, when the girl, perhaps suspecting her coming fate, took the burden on herself by saying:

"Please ma'am, mother thinks she can't spare me any longer. She says—"

"Is that so?" interrupted Faith briskly. "Well, I dare say you would have found it hard to get here through the snow in winter."

With a merrier heart than she had known for many days, Faith paid, and said a cheery good-bye to the astonished girl, who had evidently so high a sense of her great merits, that she had looked for persuasion to stay, and perhaps the offer of higher wages.

Again Faith flitted joyously about the house, getting everything in the order that best suited her fancy. For some days, full of her old activity, she swept and dusted within doors, and raked up the falling leaves without, till those

who in passing had of late missed her brisk movements, now looked again in curious approval at her busy, almost flying feet.

But long dreary days of depressing cloudiness followed. It was not often a steady down-pour of rain, whose beating on the roof is often musical and soothing, but most frequently a wretched drizzle that silently soaked the already sodden earth, and plastered the dry leaves down into the oozing mud in the most hopeless manner. Then, in the intervals of this doleful performance, would come heavy masses of stifling fog, shutting out even the dreariness that prevailed before, and making life a burden for want of one breath of clear, crisp air.

To this influence Faith succumbed, in spite of all her struggles against it. Unable to take one step beyond the piazza, and losing much of her energy for want of the bracing that air and occupation always bestowed, she grew languid and weak, till she came suddenly to the startled consciousness that she was really ill. Her friends gathered tenderly round her, eager to give help and comfort. The doctor attributed her condition mostly to the reaction that was inevitable after such extreme and long contin-

ued exertion, followed by the enforced idleness of these last dreary days, in which her mind preyed upon itself for want of more healthful food, and she had fretted over the difficulties she could no longer contend with.

It was amusing yet touching to see how Faith was besieged on all sides with offers of care and aid. Above all, she was entreated to shut up her house at once, and to take refuge in one of the many so hospitably opened to her, staying at least until she was again able to take up the burdens her nerveless hands seemed now incapable of sustaining.

Faith smiled faintly yet gratefully at this, but shook her head with all her wonted positiveness.

“But, consider how unprepared you are for actual sickness!” cried one pathetically. “You refuse our aid now; but if we come to take care of you here, where will you find a place for us to sleep?”

“Sleep!” cried Faith, rousing herself for a moment into her old sparkling manner, and assuming an air of great indignation. “If I am ill enough to need people’s coming to take care of me, do you suppose I expect them to sleep? If

they are going to sleep when they ought to be watching over me, they might as well stay at home."

"But you need care—"

"Not yet, at least. My housekeeping is so systematic and so perfectly arranged, that the little I have to do gives me just the exercise I require. As long as I can keep on my feet I shall maintain my independence; and it will be time enough for people to come pottering over me when I haven't the strength to take care of myself."

"Any one else would be in bed now—"

"Any one else would be a goose, then! Ask the doctor if it would be best for me."

Faith knew he would side with her, as he did when appealed to. She needed, he said, just to rest, without complete inaction; and he hoped soon by his tonics and sedatives, aided by her own common sense as an effectual ally, to restore the nervous tone which had been so roughly shaken.

"Come and see her as you will!" he added. "To have you coming back and forth, with your cheery faces and bits of light news from the outer world will help her to pass the

tedious hours of enforced rest. She can take care of herself still, and is the better for doing it, in moderation."

So they left Faith in peace to her sofa and her hours of idleness. She would sometimes doze for many minutes, to awaken with a smile as she found some dear face placidly regarding her. Then, in the next interval of solitude, she would read one of the books with which she was kept supplied, or drag herself languidly about the house, looking, with amused eyes, at the order that was not all her own handiwork. Dainty rolls, delicate contributions of cold turkey and celery, chicken salad, transparent slices of ham, oysters, and confections of every kind, with fruits in lavish profusion, came from all directions. Such gifts made her housekeeping a mere pretense, which was an aid in itself of practical importance; but their chief benefit was in rousing her drooping spirits to a sense of keen pleasure in recognizing the loving hearts which prompted them. The driest crust would have been welcome, given so tenderly; and Faith, with the capricious appetite of half-way illness, sometimes wondered at the varied attractiveness of these dainties. Having very lit-

tle else to do, she would frequently rouse herself up to get some California grapes or some wine-jelly, or whatever else her fancy craved, which she eat at very brief intervals.

“I’m always eating!” she declared to one friend, with her low, pleasant laugh of supreme content. “You see I’ve so many good things at hand, I really have to eat all the time to use them up. It wouldn’t do to throw them away, you know.”

For all the loving anxiety of Faith’s friends, she was soon bright and well as ever again, and she began with renewed energy to look after the house, that had been so long unswept and undusted, and to see that her house-plants were duly cared for.

“Some day I must write up my accounts,” she said to herself, with a practical business-like air. “I shall find it a strange muddle this month. Servant’s wages and doctor’s bills are new and unwelcome items; but my friends’ charity has almost balanced that amount, I fancy, by reducing my grocer’s and butcher’s bills.”

There was no morbid or foolish pride in Faith’s soul on this point. What she gratefully

accepted as prompted by the purest regard, she was proud to acknowledge, even as she delighted in the regard itself. She would have scorned and refused the richest offering that came grudgingly, however; and would have literally starved, rather than to accept life at the cost of such a degradation.

CHAPTER XI.

REST, AND PLANS FOR WINTER

Chance will not do the work—chance sends the breeze ;
But if the pilot slumber at the helm,
The very wind that wafts us toward the port
May dash us on the shelves.—SCOTT.

FAITH, having safely glided over the perilous incline of illness from her former overwrought exaltation to the plane of utter idleness, felt, even after a comparative recovery, inclined to dally awhile in that state of inaction. A curious languor possessed her, which rendered her simple household duties as much as she cared to accomplish. Perhaps even they would have been neglected if they had required much exertion, or could have been dispensed with without interfering with her personal comfort. It also made a great deal of difference, without doubt, that there was really nothing of importance claiming her attention. The season was

too far advanced for any more out-of-door enterprises; and what awaited her consideration within could very readily be deferred till she felt inclined to resume her former activity.

Thus, lounging rather lazily from one little task to another, rising much later in the morning, and idling away her time in a fashion very unlike herself, she welcomed the friends whose visits did not cease with her convalescence, and accepted their proffered drives, in a way she had not before found leisure for. Seeming almost to lose interest in her household concerns, she would just lock up the house, and go off for a few hours, or even the whole day, having no apprehensions as to its safety in her absence. She would come back a little weary, but full of pleasant memories of the cheery homes she had visited, and indirectly gaining much in health and spirits for this complete change in her mode of existence. Perhaps the sense of its necessary briefness, the certainty that not many days of mellow brightness remained to render these drives and walks enjoyable, tempted her to give herself up so unreservedly to the fleeting pleasure.

Soon, indeed, as November closed gloomily

upon the earth with little flurries of snow and nights of sharp frost, Faith found the cold without was not so easily encountered with her less rugged physique, and that the indoor home comfort needed to be more closely looked after. Building her house in the sunny June days, she had not realized its imperfect preparation for winter. The hastily constructed cellar under the house was full of wood; and she had quite overlooked the need of a place for storing coal. Even now, making with her own hands, almost unaided, a coal-bin that would hold half a ton, out of some old fence-boards, it only occurred to her later that in the country it is wise to provide fuel-supplies in the beginning for the whole winter.

Then, as it grew steadily colder and colder, she found it a trial to climb up to the servant's room, where she kept her housekeeping supplies in larger quantities, to replenish the boxes and canisters that were for immediate use. There was no room for them in the kitchen, nor in the dining-room, whose circumscribed space was already so overcrowded. After long study of this vexed question, having felt from the beginning, that her dining-room was a disappointment

to her, for want of light as well as space, Faith arrived at the desperate conclusion that she must enlarge it. This could be accomplished by making a wide arch where the window was, and building an extension four feet deep, and nearly the whole width of the dining-room. This, by putting the window in it opposite its present position, and adding another in the end of the addition, towards the east, would give much more light, and would afford space for the shelves which she so much needed. The buffet could be placed there also ; and the east window would make a charming outlook in the summer days when it was an object to avoid the glare of the sunlight. Faith hoped that very little new material would be required, as the same siding, window, and window-frame could be used, and with the exercise of care in moving them that even the painting need not be renewed. Twenty-five to thirty dollars would therefore cover the cost, and she had more than that left of her stock of ready money.

Quickly sending word to Caspar to come and make the measurements for this work, and finding he was too closely engaged elsewhere to come at once, Faith then considered another

problem. The floors of the house had of course no ceiling beneath them, and the steady fires now kept up made the floor-planks and the base-boards shrink slightly apart. It was not noticeable ordinarily ; but when the wind blew fiercely and continuously for many hours, as had already happened, and as was sure to recur many times through the winter, it made the floor cold, beyond all the stoves' warming power. Placing another floor of half-inch boards on top of the present one seemed at first the best way of meeting this difficulty. It would, however, be expensive and troublesome, thoroughly upsetting the whole house at a season when such an experience would be very uncomfortable.

Then, as a better and more feasible plan, was suggested that of putting a water-proof paper sheathing down on the floor, followed by a double carpet-lining, with folded newspapers laid smoothly along the outer edges, and the carpet then replaced. The cost of this would be about three dollars, where the other plan would have required perhaps fifty. It would add nearly as much in thickness, and have the advantage of being softer to the tread and also warmer, as well as absolutely excluding air and

dampness, which would make it especially desirable in summer. It could also be done by Faith's own hands, and at her leisure. Providing herself with all the materials, she could take occasional bright days and do one or two rooms at a time, as she should find it convenient ; and give it up, too, if it did not result beneficially, with less loss and disturbance than the other plan would involve.

Beginning this undertaking at once, Faith was fortunate in finding several days that were warm enough, within the next two weeks, to ascertain the practicability and advantage of the scheme. It was nearly done when Caspar came to make his measurements for the dining-room extension. He smiled as good-humoredly as ever, at Faith's busy fingers and bright, cheery ways, and admired all her various bits of handiwork very much, wondering how she could have done it all in those few months. He could not commence work at once, he said ; but promised to lose no time, while assuring her it would involve no exposure to her from the cold, as he could work almost entirely from the outside.

CHAPTER XII.

A NEW SUCCESS.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine ;
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that, and th' action fine.—HERBERT.

The reward of one duty, is the power to fulfill another.
GEORGE ELIOT.

FAITH'S earnest devotion to whatever task she took in hand often carried her to extremes, which the world was apt to regard doubtfully, if not with a censure which her pure motives did not fairly deserve. Various strongly combining circumstances had led her to initiate the unusual experiment which had been thus far so comparatively successful. No other scheme of life that was within the scope of her limited means had seemed endurable to her. To have dragged herself about the world, finding an existence that was barely tolerable in the wretched array of cheap boarding-houses, where alone she

could have afforded to seek shelter, seemed to her proud spirit simply detestable. Even if the novelty had amused her for a while, she would have found it infinitely wearisome sooner or later; and then the problem that she had now partly solved would still present itself. She could not afford to defer her action a year or two, and to lose thus much of the active strength which had so wonderfully sustained her. Now, seeing clearly that she could in the future live comfortably in her new home on her income, she was ready in the mean time to strain every nerve to economize sufficiently to pay off the mortgage which was her only pecuniary burden. She knew that greater ease and the aid of a servant would some day become necessary to her, and if the mortgage could first be got rid of by the most strenuous exertions, she was full of eager zeal to make them. Her brief illness had somewhat startled her; and she determined to "make hay while the sun shone" in good earnest, as she felt her wonted energies revive.

Faith's one annoyance thus far had been the unsatisfactory way in which her washing and ironing were done. Accustomed to have her

own neat efficient ways carried out under her personal direction, she found the work that was done amid such different surroundings very far from acceptable. Women who were used to washing the rough, much soiled garments of their own families, would rub just as vigorously her dainty lace and embroidery, to its unavoidable detriment. Then, hanging up the clothes, regardless of the high winds or the clouds of dust that might prevail, and careless of the consequent rents and dinginess, they would iron them in a close, stuffy kitchen, and send them home reeking of cooking-odors and tobacco-smoke. Faith, enduring this for a while because there seemed no help for it, was on the alert to grasp at a possible remedy. Hearing of a washing-machine that seemed to be actually scientific, she studied its feasibility carefully, saw that it *might* be a success, and promptly procured one.

It was simply an arrangement by which a circuit of boiling water was established, which, passing rapidly over and over again through the clothes, cleansed them by its action, without the friction that is so provokingly destructive. It had also the advantage of leaving no spot un-

touched. The rubbing by hand on a wash-board often misses many places that most need it, although it is sure to be vigorous enough wherever delicate material calls for tender treatment.

Taking a bright and sunny day for this new enterprise, Faith had a glowing fire ready in the kitchen before breakfast, for an early start. It was only necessary to put the boiler on nearly full of water, with the apparatus arranged in it, and some bits of soap; and to add the clothes after rubbing soap wherever they were soiled. Twenty minutes of boiling cleansed them, during which time Faith could rest, or occupy herself elsewhere. Then a thorough rinsing showed the clothes white and pure as snow, and Faith blithely hung them up, wondering why washing was such a trial and a bug-bear to the world when it could be made so easy. She had accomplished in an hour, with very little trouble, and without any splashing of water, or disarray of her dress, what a servant would have spent half a day in doing, besides drenching the kitchen and herself with soap-suds.

The next day, Faith, ever resolute in carrying out the experiment practically, and in all its

details, accomplished the ironing in an hour and a half. It was a less pleasant task for her unaccustomed hands, and she burned her fingers once or twice, besides scorching her face over the fire. Still, it was done, and very much better than usual, if it was wearisome.

“The man who invented that machine was a Yankee, of course!” mused Faith, as she folded up the trophies of her skill and put them away very triumphantly. “Well! if another one will only contrive an ironing-machine, the greatest burden of housekeeping will be done away with forever.”

For a few weeks, perhaps longer, Faith knew it would simply be an amusement to occupy herself with her new toy, especially as, just now, she had so little of active work to do. When she got tired of it, she would arrange to have some one come to the house and do the work under her direction; and meantime, her own use of the machine would probably pay its first cost.

“Oh!” she cried, impulsively some weeks later, as she took her accounts in hand to make a statement for the second quarter just expiring. “If it wasn’t for that mortgage how easy everything would be!”

This time the work on the house was :

Making the extension to the dining-room, of which the material cost.....	\$16 25
The carpenter work.....	9 50
One double sash.....	2 00
	<hr/>
	\$27 75

For house-furnishing were :

One washing-machine.....	\$2 00
Four kitchen-towels.....	40
Six doilies.....	75
One looking-glass.....	1 00
Two pudding-dishes.....	20
	<hr/>
	\$4 35

The housekeeping statement varied oddly from the former one, showing that, while the breakfast supplies had been about the same, those for other meals were very much less. This was due to the delicacies brought so often by her friends during her illness, and which frequently spared her the exertion of getting a regular lunch or dinner. Then, too, as she became convalescent, she was often absent at one or both of these meals; while only once or twice had this occurred at breakfast, when she remained away overnight. Her actual supplies had been :

Five and a half pounds of coffee.....	\$1 37
Two pounds of oatmeal.....	30
Three pounds of wheat-germs.....	45
Three pounds of hominy.....	15
Forty-five quarts of milk.....	2 25
Eighteen pounds of beef, twelve pounds of chicken, nine pounds of mutton, five pounds of sausage.....	6 75
One hundred and fifty oysters.....	1 50
Four dozens eggs.....	1 00
Nine pounds of butter.....	2 25
Half gallon of California sherry.....	1 50
One dozen of Milwaukee lager beer.....	1 25
Twenty-one pounds of flour.....	70
Three and a half pounds of sugar.....	24
Rolls.....	25
Vegetables.....	1 18
One bushel of apples, four fruit-trees.....	1 00
Firewood.....	50
Coal.....	11 50
Washing, ironing, and wages.....	4 50
Cream, lemons, claret, and fruit for party.....	1 00
Soap, pepper, salt, and kerosene.....	95
	<hr/>
	\$40 59

This amount did not greatly exceed the account for the first three months, although it included the heavy item of coal.

"The economy of sickness forsooth!" murmured Faith, as she looked dolefully at the formidable array of figures. "It doesn't pay at all to be sick. Still I would have needed the coal any way, I suppose. Now, let's see about my personal expenses."

These were :

One pair of gloves.....	\$0 75
One pair of overshoes.....	35
Three yards of plush.	2 25
Doctor's bill.....	9 00
One book.....	25
	<hr/>
	\$12 60

Faith had studied over her wardrobe before attempting to make a statement of her accounts, rather dreading to find numerous needs that must imperatively be supplied. She was, however, not only a careful manager, but also very dexterous in contriving ways of prolonging the days of usefulness for many articles of apparel. She found her possessions amply sufficient, not only for comfort, but for a due regard for appearances, during the winter, with one exception. Of silk dresses, house-dresses, and out-of-door wraps there were enough; but her black velvet dress, which for two winters already had been so warm and serviceable for driving or visiting, was scarcely presentable for another season. Again, her wits were called to aid. The purchase of three yards of steel-gray plush, the remodeling of the whole dress with the addition of this material, and its thorough renovation at her skillful hands met this grave

difficulty successfully, and was an economy in which she took especial pride, as well as in a bonnet made of the pieces of velvet and plush.

A full statement of the second quarter's account, Faith found as follows :

Income for three months.....	\$75 00
Taxes and interest.....	\$11 25
House-furnishing.....	4 35
Housekeeping.....	40 59
Personal expenses	12 60
	<hr/>
	\$68 79
	<hr/>
	\$6 21

Poor Faith felt a moment's discouragement at this result ; but quickly cheered up again as she reflected how wonderful it was that any balance at all was left during the first six months. So many extra expenses had been incurred, the benefit of which only the future would feel, that she was sure her income would always permit the payment of something, however trifling, on the mortgage. This would be lessening the interest each year ; and so, sooner or later, the burden would be lifted, and she would be free from its weight of care and anxiety.

There might not for years be any further outlay required on the house. Faith found now that, after paying for the dining-room extension

and the extra lining on the floors, she had twenty-four dollars left of the ready money she fortunately had on hand. This, with the sixteen dollars and sixty-seven cents left of her income, enabled her to pay forty dollars on the mortgage, leaving a balance of sixty-seven cents in her favor to begin the new year with.

With a flush of embarrassment at the smallness of this sum, yet proud, too, of having it to offer, Faith paid it with the half-year's interest promptly on the first day of January, saying softly to herself as she came home again:

"I'll make it up to one hundred in July, if I live and keep well! I know I can do it. I can see even now just where the difference can be saved. But oh, for a windfall! for some providential help to clear it off faster! I don't care how hard I may have to work. Was ever task-master so cruel as a mortgage?"

Faith sighed and pondered. No gleam of light came, yet she trusted still. She knew she had done her utmost in every respect; that on the fulfilled duties of the past she could build firmly for future higher aims and progress.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SPINNING-JACKS.

A virtuous deed should never be delayed ;
The impulse comes from Heaven, and he who strives
A moment to repress it, disobeys
The god within his mind.—ALEXANDER DOW.

THAT same evening, Faith sat in her arm-chair in front of the parlor-fire, with her hands clasped over her knees, and lost for many moments in a profound reverie. An open letter lay in her lap at which she glanced anxiously more than once. Presently she started up impulsively, saying aloud :

“Yes! I will do it! There is not much risk, if any; and I can’t be passive in such an emergency.”

Quickly seating herself at her little table, she began writing with nervous eagerness.

“You told me once, Hester Nymscywitch, that you wondered how it would feel to be an

instrument of Providence; you imagined one would be overpowered with awe and dread. Well! is that your present experience? Or are you unconscious of the deep chord you have touched, whose re-echoing is thrilling me so forcibly? Never could you, in merely gossiping mood, have told me that sad story of poor Letitia MacJimpsey's fate. How well I remember her in our school-days, when she was so especially my own friend! Do you remember how we teased her for changing her name to one so much odder, when she married Abner Spinning-Jack? And so he is dead—nice, handsome fellow that he was! And he leaves Letitia with her two children, to live or starve on \$450 a year! It is true, as you say, that no where can they possibly subsist on that sum under any ordinary circumstances. But I've been thinking, dear old Hester, thinking hard for half an hour at least; and I see just what might be done. I write to you, rather than to Letty, because you will know best how to make the matter clear to her. You see I have just been squaring my accounts for the first half-year, and they really do square delightfully, taking everything into consideration. I find my actual living

expenses need not be more than \$150 a year. This gives me every *comfort*, but does not pay for any nonsense. Then, as I have now supplied all deficiencies in my furnishing and have very few personal needs, I ought to pay \$100 every year on the mortgage, besides paying interest and taxes, which amount to forty-five dollars. Now, why shouldn't Letty and the children come here to share my roof and crust? They can live here comfortably, if they will be content with the life I find so enjoyable. But I want my motives in making the offer very clearly understood. In the first place, if she will pay \$350 a year, reserving the rest for her own use, I will risk the chance of their expenses being beyond that sum. There are many items, such as fire, light, and shelter, whose cost their presence would not increase. These will afford a margin for their benefit or mine as it may happen. Now, while I most of all want to help Letty, and with all my heart would make her welcome in any case, I must say frankly that I believe the sum which would be cruelly insufficient for any other mode of life, will be enough here to give them independence as well as comfort. I believe, if they will share

my light burdens of housework, so far as their presence adds to their weight, that by prudent management even my *bête noir*, that dreadful mortgage, will be also more rapidly paid off. If, as hitherto, we manage among us to do everything except the laundry-work, I feel sure, that, at the worst, our joint incomes will keep our bills paid; while I confidently hope for even better results. Will you tell all this to Letty? Tell her that I have been sighing in my retreat for some congenial soul, to whom I might whisper:

“‘... solitude is sweet.’

“If she prefers it, we will make the experiment a temporary one, and try it for three or six months. I may be a wearisome companion for every-day existence, but I can't be worse than the wretched boarding-house people with whom she must otherwise have found shelter.

“I have said nothing of the contingency you mention of Letty's possibly realizing the disputed insurance on her husband's life. The question is merely one of irregularity in the papers, you say; and it seems that such an excuse for non-payment ought not to be tenable. Still, if it is left to the courts to decide, delay, if

not final disappointment, is probable. Letty had best not waste her thoughts on that hope, wise as it of course is to press the claim as strongly as she can. The interest of \$5,000 would add to her income very comfortably.

“I can only repeat that I earnestly hope Letty will accept my offer, for her own sake first, for mine afterward. I have seen little of the children for some years. The girl, Daisy, must be fairly in her teens by this time. If she is half as sweet and gentle as her mother was when I first knew her, she will find a very warm corner in my heart waiting for her. Charley is younger, and I don't recall him clearly. He will be sure to keep us wide awake with his mischief, if he is at all like his father.

“I have already planned everything for this change in my household. I will give Letty and Daisy my room where there is a double bed, and put up a smaller one in the library for myself. Then, Charley can have the room over the kitchen, which is really a very pretty one, and is partly furnished too. I am ready and waiting for them now. They may come by the next train, if they will; but they must not disappoint me by a refusal. Write quickly, dear

Hester. I have set my heart on this thing, and it grows upon me wonderfully the more I think of it. I was fairly crying to Providence for just the help and comfort it promises, when your letter came in such direct response to my desire.

“Faithfully your friend,

“FAITH ARDEN.”

The next two days seemed interminable to Faith, as she watched each mail and wandered disconsolately about the house, eager to make her preparations, yet not venturing to do so until certainty gave warrant for it. On the third morning came the following hasty note:

“DEAR FAITH: How true as steel you always are! I did tell you Letty’s story, quite expecting the very response you have made. It has always been a worry to me to know of your utter loneliness in your home. I never decried your independence, even when you were working so hard; but I feared another illness, which might find you less able to take care of yourself. With the Spinning-Jacks to share your burdens as well as your comfort, life will be ever so much brighter for you all. Letty will come gladly,

and at once; but she makes some conditions that are fair and just, I think. You wanted her to reserve \$100 out of her tiny income for personal uses. Now, she stipulates that, while she will aid you actively in every way, you must let her pay all that their presence actually costs, at the very least. Also, if the insurance money ever comes, you must let her make such additional payments as would then be reasonable. I don't think she would come to you at all, if she did not hope to aid you in paying off your mortgage. She is quite sanguine about the insurance being paid some day.

"They will be with you to-morrow, having taken you literally at your word. At my suggestion, Letty will bring some bits of silver and china and other nicknacks that she has preserved through all her troubles, because they were wedding-presents. These, with her little store of house-linen, will probably meet all your increased needs.

"I shall come very soon to admire the harmonious accord which I expect to find established among you.

"Cordially always,

"HESTER NYMSCYWITCH.

“P. S.—By the way, it’s very nice to be an instrument of Providence in a case like this ; but I’m wondering what the instruments do when people don’t respond properly to their suggestions. It isn’t quite so satisfactory then, is it?”

Faith had never realized how much her loneliness had weighed upon her at times, nor, till its success came so suddenly upon her, how keenly she had desired this result of her plan. Her eyes shone with a wonderful light of hope and joy as she flitted about the house in busy delight.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEW INMATES.

Tender-hearted stroke a nettle,
And it stings you for your pains ;
Grasp it like a man of mettle,
And it soft as silk remains.—AARON HILL.

WITH joyous eagerness, Faith hastened to make all the needed preparations for her friends coming. She had much to do, and very few hours to do it in ; but when in the early twilight of those short days the heavy stage-sleigh came toiling to her door, everything was done, and she stood on the door-step, blithe and happy, as she greeted and led them within to the warm, brightly lighted hall. She could scarcely avoid showing by her sudden start and glance of dismay, how shocked she was by her friend's greatly changed appearance. The pale, sad-looking woman with snow-white hair, whose lips quivered so piteously as they strove to respond to Faith's warm greeting, was a mere shadow, a

perfect wreck of the sweet, gentle creature of old times, whose sunny smiles were always so charming. The daughter, Daisy, with the shy grace of her sixteen years, was far more like Faith's remembrance of her mother; while Charley, with a bold yet awkward mien, flashed upon her a look that was so full of suppressed fun, so suggestive of mischief-loving propensities, that she quite forgot the dignity of his overgrown boyhood, and gave him a cordial hug.

"How good you are, Faith!" began Mrs. Spinning-Jack brokenly.

"Hush!" interrupted Faith, giving her a second kiss, and leading her forward to her own room. "You've just time to remove your wraps and get settled a little before dinner—"

"Dinner!" cried Daisy rapturously. "Do you dine late? How delightful!"

"Yes! I am faithful to the good old way," said Faith, hurriedly, as she opened the outer door of the room, and told the stage-driver, who was taking their baggage out of the sleigh, to bring it in that way.

"Now don't stop to unpack," she went on, when this was accomplished. "It is too cold to stay in here long. Come into the parlor, as soon

as you are ready, where you can get thoroughly warmed."

Then, slipping out quietly to see that the dinner was keeping up its merry boiling, and glancing again at the dining-table to be sure of its due arrangement, Faith was just taking up the broiler, in which a beefsteak was already waiting its turn, when Daisy's soft voice whispered reproachfully:

"I thought we were to help you so much, and here you have everything ready—"

"Oh, there'll be plenty for you to do, by-and-by," said Faith, as she ascertained that the potatoes, turnips, and tomatoes were about done, and pushed them back a little to make room for the steak.

In very few minutes this simple, yet appetizing meal was arranged on the table, its delicious aroma calling on the hungry guests to come quickly and partake of it, before it grew chill and less enjoyable by delay.

"What a cook you are, Faith!" observed Mrs. Spinning-Jack, with reviving sprightliness. "It puts me in mind of our school-days, when we used to have such rural feasts. Do you remember?"

"Indeed, I do! I always had a 'taste for low pursuits,' as Miss Alderney used to proclaim with such withering sarcasm."

"Rural feasts!" cried Daisy enviously. "O mamma! how much better times you must have had than girls ever do now!"

"Times change, my dear," said her mother, smiling at the girl's tone. "Children always have fun of one kind or another. In our day, our parents would have been horrified at girls going to the theatre at your age. So we had our frolics and feasts, while you have your parties and theatres. It comes to the same thing in the end, I suppose. Faith, did you make these rolls?"

"Yes!" she answered, nodding gayly at her friend's approving tone. "It is a treat I owe to your coming. I never could make a small enough quantity for myself, and so I had to buy two or three at a time. Now I shall make bread regularly, which will be a great economy, besides being so much better than baker's bread."

"No doubt, you will try to demonstrate that our being here will reduce your expenses, and—"

"Indeed, no! Don't lay that flattering unc-

tion to your soul!" said Faith, as she rose and began deftly gathering together the plates and viands they no longer needed, and putting them on a side-table. "No!" she added, as Mrs. Spinning-Jack made a movement to rise. "It will only take me a moment. Daisy may help me another day; but you see everything is ready at hand. I am always as lazy as I dare to be without actually starving myself."

As she spoke, she placed a dish of custard and another of raspberry-marmalade on the table, with plates and spoons, and again sat down.

When they had partaken of this dessert, Faith let them assist her in arranging everything for an immediate washing up. It would no longer be practicable to do this only once a day, and she made no pretense of not using their services. With plenty of hot water and those additional willing hands, it occupied scarcely fifteen minutes to complete the task; and when the dining-room was again in due order, they rested and chatted awhile in the cheery, warmly glowing firelight of the parlor.

Faith very frankly explained all her plan of housekeeping, and accepted at once their offers

of assistance in every detail. Daisy was eager to learn everything, and ambitious of having the whole burden laid on her young shoulders as soon as she was competent to bear it with honor and success.

"We will all fall into our appointed places by degrees," said Faith. "What each one shows an especial talent for shall be so assigned; and if we only have a sufficient variety of qualifications, we shall soon present to the world the spectacle of a model household, where everything is done to perfection."

"And what am I to do?" asked Charley, gravely. "I don't know anything about cooking. I might peel potatoes—"

"You lovely boy! if you will do that, it will be enchanting," cried Faith. "I always disliked it so much that I preferred cooking them with their skins on. I even mind washing them; it makes my hands so rough. I shall ever gratefully remember a good neighbor who told me it was admissible to wash a week's supply of potatoes at once. I have done it ever since on Saturday mornings."

"Well! I'll wash 'em and peel 'em, too, if you like," said Charley, more confidently. "I don't

believe there's anything else I could do, but I'd like to learn first-rate. I can carry coal for the fires, any way. Don't you want some now?" and he started up with great alacrity.

"Not till bed-time!" returned Faith, laughing at his eagerness. "There's lots of things you can do, Charley. Besides looking after the fires, you can go to the post-office every day, and run on errands for us, as well as take care of us when we go out walking."

"What are you afraid of?" he asked, curiously. "Are there lions or bears in the woods about here?"

"You foolish Charley!" said his mother. "I suspect squirrels are the largest wild animals you can find here."

"And rabbits," he rejoined. "Shall I catch some rabbits and squirrels to make a pie?" he asked of Faith, fixing his eyes eagerly upon her.

"I think not," she said, rather soberly. "I like chicken-pie best, don't you?"

"Yes! have you got any chickens?"

"No! but I believe I'll get some if you'll take care of them for me. Would you like that?"

“Jolly well!” he proclaimed, exultingly. “I’ll feed ’em splendidly, and get lots of eggs; you just see if I don’t.”

It seemed strange to Faith, as they all now retired to their rooms for the rest they needed after so wearisome a journey, to stand for some moments before the parlor fire, and listen to the low buzz of their voices and the light footsteps that so unwontedly sounded through the house. For six months she had dwelt alone; and above all had prized her quiet restful evenings that were so undisturbed, so full of repose and comfort. She had indeed taken up a new, a strange burden. Would it be more than she could bear? Hastily as the whole matter had been arranged, there had been moments of misgiving already, in which she had feared for the result. Perhaps, if she had considered the plan more leisurely, and had studied out each detail, she would never have had the nerve to undertake it. But it had come upon her as a stroke of fate. She had yielded to an irresistible guidance, without questioning its influence for good; and now that the first step was taken, she felt a moment’s irresolution. Then the memory of that sad, sweet face, so clouded with the sorrow she

might hope to alleviate, came back to her, bringing a rush of salutary tears to her eyes.

“No!” she said, softly to herself. “I will not turn back now. They will be happy here, and useful too in sharing and lightening my cares. At the very least, I shall have brightened their pathway and consoled their grief. It may very well be that my own great anxiety, the payment of that dreadful mortgage, will be helped, too.”

Faith lingered for some moments, now putting a chair more accurately in its place or arranging the books on the table, till gradually all sounds of life throughout the house had ceased. The tired travelers were at rest; and she softly put out the light, and turned to the library, which was now to be her own room, with a slight sense of depression. To the young, changes are ever welcome. They seem always to contain an element of promise, which youth interprets favorably in its irrepressible hopefulness. To Faith, however, even the occupation of a different room was a little repelling. It jarred upon her nerves like a faint touch of discord. The very aspect of the room was not cheering. After contriving to make Charley’s cozy and comfort-

able with such appliances as she had at hand, it being impossible on so short notice to procure others, even were she willing to incur the expense, there only remained the lounge which had been in the dining-room, with the addition of a mattress and other bedding, for her own use. She had all that was necessary; but the want of space in that small room, after being accustomed to one so much larger, and its limited conveniences, chafed Faith and tried her nerves sadly for the first few days.

CHAPTER XV.

AN OVERTHROWN MONARCH.

In tracing the shade, I shall find out the sun ;
Trust to me !—OWEN MEREDITH.

The storm is past, but it hath left behind it
Ruin and desolation.—LONGFELLOW.

It did not take many days for the machinery of Faith's domestic regulations to adjust itself to the little changes which the Spinning-Jacks' presence made necessary, and to be running as smoothly and harmoniously as ever. Faith had secretly dreaded possible jarring and heart-burnings among them, as they commenced their new life in the depth of winter, when the inclemency of the weather would so often keep them closely within-doors. It seemed at first like such a crowd in the tiny house ; and some little jostling appeared absolutely inevitable at moments when different tastes claimed indulgence that could not always be granted. But

fortunately their varied impulses never ran counter to one another. Mrs. Spinning-Jack at once proclaimed an especial vocation for dusting and sweeping, and asked to have that made her exclusive charge. It was the one thing, next to peeling potatoes, that Faith had a distaste for; and she gladly undertook the culinary department. Here, however, she found two zealous assistants in the younger Spinning-Jacks, who had developed a glowing devotion to her service, and insisted on being ever at her side. They were often almost under her feet, indeed, in their eagerness to learn all the mysteries she was such an adept in. Charley wielded the coal-shovel with unabated ardor, and really kept the fires steadily burning with wonderful management; while he gloried in his artistically piled up ash-heap outside, as if it were one of the finest structures in the world. Daisy had a natural taste for cooking that was an actual talent; and while Faith's restraining hand was sometimes needed to prevent a too lavish use of expensive ingredients, the girl's innate neatness kept her from wasting even the merest fragments. She would pore over some old books of great culinary fame that Faith had, and de-

light in finding some new and toothsome mode of utilizing what seemed almost refuse. Charley even accused her of secreting his potato and turnip peelings to make a pudding of; but Daisy stoutly denied that charge, declaring he had eaten them up himself, in a sudden fit of ravenousness.

For a while, Faith had tremulously watched, as she noted down her outlays, lest she should either stint her guests in actual comfort, or insensibly spend more than their slender means permitted. She was soon satisfied with the correctness of her first impression, that the supplies for four persons would not in most cases need to be more than three times what she had used for herself; and as long as she followed her former programme generally, she felt tolerably safe.

It was a trial too, for many days, to have always bustling footsteps and cheery voices sounding through the house. More than once, in a fit of nervous desperation, she contrived to send them all off for a walk, that she might take breath, and rest a moment, in the delightful stillness that followed their departure. It was indeed a great relief; and she lounged in an

easy-chair before the fire, trying to school herself into patience, and to recall the great need that existed for them all of this intimate association. Long before they came back she was calmed and soothed into a more congenial frame of mind; and as they entered, rosy and laughing over some incident of their walk, bringing bunches of bright berries, or some other trophy of Charley's skill in scrambling through rough places, she welcomed them with a gladness at which she was almost surprised.

Faith's little household tasks became very trifles, having so many hands to help her; and with all the dreary, gloomy days in which going out was impossible beyond a hurried walk up and down the piazza, there came to be almost a dearth of active occupation. For Charley, who claimed the privilege of foraging for broken branches to keep up the fire in Faith's room, and who had various errands every day either to the post-office—or with orders to the grocery and market, there was out-of-door duty enough to keep him busy and healthy too. But Mrs. Spinning-Jack, seeing how little there was for the others to do, and far more anxious than even Faith was to curtail expenses as much as possi-

ble, no sooner learned of the washing-machine's success, than she insisted on continuing its use.

"It will just be an amusement for us," she urged, when Faith shook her head at the suggestion. "There need not be any exposure to the weather. There is always one day in each week when it is sunny and pleasant for drying the clothes; and the ironing is really pleasant work."

"But it is not necessary" persisted Faith. "I calculated on allowing a dollar a week for our washing, and we can afford it easily."

"You are not sure of that! Your estimates are so ridiculously low, I don't believe they will stand the test of trial at all. Besides, it is always safe to have a margin for accidents. Let us create one with the aid of this washing-machine. Well!" as Faith still looked troubled over the notion, "let us try it for a week or two then!"

Faith consented to this as a compromise of their differing opinions; but the result showed so much more satisfactory work than the usual mode of washing could produce, while the money saved was no trifling amount, that without further discussion, the plan was continued.

Charley, however, claimed all the credit to himself. It was his delight to sit and watch the process and keep up the steam, while the others took their ease in the parlor, only coming in at intervals to rinse and hang up what Charley declared were sufficiently "cooked," and to prepare a new batch.

There came early in March some terrible gales of wind that often raged with such violence as to keep them close prisoners for days together. Now the wisdom of building so low a structure was evident; for while the storm without was fierce enough to have carried them off their feet, had they ventured abroad, there was a delightful sense of quiet and shelter within. Charley, in his upper room, used sometimes to hear the thunderous echoes at a distance as the gale swept furiously up the valley beneath his window; but the others slept tranquilly through it all.

Once a crash came in the early dawn that aroused them all, however, as a huge chestnut-tree fell prone to the earth not twenty feet from the east end of the house. It was the last sullen effort of the storm, which had pretty well abated, when an hour later, they gathered upon

the piazza to observe the wreck, and speculate on the easiest way of its being cleared up.

"My poor old tree!" cried Faith, rather dolefully. "I gathered ever so many chestnuts from it in the fall."

"Never you mind!" interrupted Charley, in boisterous eagerness to console her. "It'll be of more use to you now than it ever was before; you see if it isn't."

"It will cost something to get it carried away," said Mrs. Spinning-Jack, regretfully.

"I don't know," began Faith, thoughtfully.

"I'll tell you all about it," cried the irrepressible Charley. "I've been examining and measuring it, and it'll make about twenty famous fence-posts, besides lots of firewood for your stove, Miss Faith."

"But how to get it cut up—"

"I'll attend to that! You just leave it to me. You were saying the other day you would want some fence-posts in the spring."

"Yes! three or four; but you don't know, Charley, how much it costs to hire a man to make them."

"I tell you I know just how to manage it," repeated the boy, sturdily. "Just let's have

breakfast, and I'll see about it right off afterward."

That was all the explanation he would give them then; but in less than an hour after breakfast, Charley made his appearance in the parlor, his eyes sparkling and his face all aglow with triumph, as he tried to say, carelessly :

"Miss Faith, there's a man wants to speak with you."

"Who is it?" she asked, looking up in great surprise.

"It's just farmer Cricketfield. He wants some chestnut fence-posts, he says."

Faith started up with quick pleasure. "You good Charley!" she exclaimed. "That is well managed."

Going out with him, she found he had already driven a shrewd bargain with farmer Cricketfield, who was willing to cut as many fence-posts as the tree would make, paying ten cents apiece for them; and to make the rest into cord-wood, either on shares, or to give three dollars a cord for it, cutting it himself.

"The boy said you wanted some fence-posts, yourself," said the farmer, as Faith made a rapid

calculation in her mind of what his offer would realize.

"I may want some in the spring," returned Faith," but there is a dead cedar-tree that will make all I need. I think I will accept your offer; only you must not delay the work. I don't want all that rubbish lying round longer than can be helped."

Farmer Cricketfield promised to do it as fast as possible; and it became a new excitement for Charley to watch the process of turning the huge tree into fence-posts and cord-wood.

First removing the branches, the farmer and a man he brought with him sawed the massive trunk, with a cross-cut saw, into lengths of seven feet each. Nearly all of these were split into four pieces; and then as many lengths as possible were made from the branches, which usually could only be split once. Then the smaller pieces were chopped into cord-wood lengths of four feet, and piled up ready for measurement.

Charley's inexperienced estimate was exceeded by the reality. The tree made thirty-eight posts and one cord of wood, realizing for Faith six dollars and eighty cents.

She decided on selling it all, as it would be

a material help toward the July installment on the mortgage; and there were plenty of fragments and chips left on the ground to supply her stove for two or three weeks. She no longer needed a steady fire in her room now, as spring was so near. The parlor fire kept it warm enough, except for an occasional cold snap.

CHAPTER XVI.

FINANCIAL VICTORY.

The flood of time is rolling on,
We stand upon its brink, whilst they are gone
To glide in peace down death's mysterious stream,
Have ye done well?—SHELLEY.

AGAIN Faith was deep in the mysteries of adjusting her memoranda, and working out the statement of another three months' account. April had dawned in a gentle sunshiny fashion; and, while Nature was struggling, with a fair show of success, to reassert her right to bloom once more in herb and flower, frost's grim reign was comparatively over. At Faith's suggestion, the Spinning-Jacks had gone for a walk and left her to tackle her long rows of figures alone; although Mrs. Spinning-Jack had paused to say rather dolefully:

“You had better let me stay and help you, Faith. I shall not enjoy my walk, for thinking of you sitting here alone, puzzling your brains

over the burden we have brought upon you. I do so dread your finding only disastrous results."

"There isn't the least danger of that," replied Faith, brightly, "I may not have made much out of you, but I'm sure I've not lost anything."

So she had her way about it, and settled down resolutely to her undertaking.

"At least I have nothing to record in the way of building or repairs," she murmured, contentedly. "And—let me see—no! actually I have made no purchases for the house-furnishing either, thanks to Letty's supplies in that line. Now, we will see how the account for our living expenses stands."

She found that no item was more than three times the amount she had used for herself; and often but little more than twice. Fuel and light but slightly exceeded the former quantities, as the result of keeping up the kitchen fire more steadily, and the need of additional lights in her guests' rooms. The articles of food varied in some particulars, as the season's supplies changed in nature. The statement was as follows:

One hundred and forty-five quarts of milk.....	\$7 25
Fifty-four pounds of beef, thirty-eight pounds of mutton, twenty-eight pounds of poultry, ten pounds of sausages.	21 35
Six pounds of oatmeal.....	90
Ten pounds of hominy.....	50
Twenty pounds of Indian meal.....	50
One gallon of syrup.....	50
Two packages of macaroni.....	46
Two pumpkins.....	20
Yeast.....	25
Twenty-one pounds of sugar.....	1 35
One case of canned tomatoes.....	2 00
One barrel of potatoes.....	2 25
One bushel of turnips.....	40
One-half bushel of onions.....	60
One peck of cranberries.....	40
Four pounds of tapioca.....	40
Eight dozen eggs.....	2 40
Thirty-four pounds of butter.....	8 50
Seventy-five pounds of flour.....	1 75
Two barrels of apples.....	4 25
Three tons of coal.....	17 25
Six gallons of kerosene.....	1 20
Four lamp-chimneys.....	30
Oysters and fish.....	5 45
Baking-powder.....	50
Four pounds of dried currants.....	40
Five pounds of lard.....	60
One pound of ginger.....	40
One jar of mince-meat.....	75
Sixteen pounds of coffee.....	4 00
Four pounds of tea.....	2 40
Soap, condiments, spices, starch.....	63
Wages.....	4 00
	<hr/>
	\$94 09

Faith stared at these figures in simple amazement, into which gradually crept a feeling of intense satisfaction. She went over her memoranda, and added up the column several times to be sure of having made no mistake, before she gave herself up to the relief and delight this result inspired. Of course, her discontinuing the use of wine at dinner had been an economy of some importance. She had felt, however, that in her quieter, less energetic life she no longer needed it; and had dreaded the example of its use to Daisy and Charley. Mrs. Spinning-Jack fancied a cup of tea after dinner; and so Faith had adopted the fashion of having it, with some crackers, or cake, later in the evening. The washing-machine had dispensed with the usual laundry-bill; but Faith had provided materials for desserts that were more expensive than had been her custom to use, meaning thus indirectly to make amends for the laundry-work they were doing. An occasional half-day from a woman in the neighborhood, who came to scrub the kitchen and wash windows, added another necessary item to the account; for this was work, necessary indeed, but altogether out of the question for their own doing.

Having thus enjoyed real comfort, without any material self-denial, it was wonderful that four persons should have lived for three months on \$94.09. There could no longer be any question of their income being sufficient, and even of its allowing greater luxury in the future, when the winter had found it such an ample provision, while including so many extra expenses.

After she had silently contemplated this comforting state of affairs for some moments, Faith turned to look for items of personal expenditure. These again were very slight, being:

Knitting worsted.....	30
One half dozen handkerchiefs.....	1 48
Hair-pins.....	10
	<hr/>
	\$1 88

Then came the statement of the whole. Her resources had been:

Her own income for three months.....	\$75 00	
Her balance from last account.....	67	
Realized from chestnut-tree.....	6 80	
Mrs. Spinning-Jack's contribution.....	87 50	
	<hr/>	\$169 97
The house expenses for three months were.....	\$94 09	
Her personal expenses for three months were....	1 88	
Taxes and interest for three months were.....	10 75	106 72
		<hr/>
		\$63 25

Thus Faith had already in hand more than enough to complete her hoped for payment of \$100 each year on the mortgage; and the interest would of course decrease all the time. At this rate, her installment in July would be at least \$100 in itself, for the rapid approach of a more genial temperature would soon relieve her from much of the heaviest item of expense, in the consumption of fuel.

When Mrs. Spinning-Jack returned, and with evident nervousness and anxiety came to Faith, half dreading to ask the result of her calculations, she was puzzled and disheartened for a moment at the grave face that met her eager glance.

“What is it Faith?” she asked, falteringly. “Have we fairly eaten you out of house and home, after all? I was afraid—”

“No!” said Faith, rousing herself up at this. “It is I, on the contrary, who am taking a mean advantage of your confidence. Look at this!” placing the account in her hands as she spoke.

Mrs. Spinning-Jack glanced rapidly at the final statement, and then exclaimed, eagerly:

“Oh Faith! are you sure? It’s too good to

be true! You must have made some mistake somewhere!"

"No! I am sure of the correctness of my figures, but not of my conduct," returned Faith, slowly. "Think of my letting you do that laundry-work, and helping me to save and pinch at every turn, not for your own comfort, but only to throw away so much more on that horrid mortgage!"

"But that just delights me!" said her friend, earnestly. "The work was but fun for us all; and I'm sure we've had a real good time doing it. As for pinching and saving, I don't see what more we could have had that would have increased our comfort."

"Well! there shall be no more laundry-work!" said Faith, resolutely.

"Nonsense! we like it, and—"

"No! no!" interrupted Faith, with a quick flush as she spoke. "As long as it is not necessary, it shall not be done. I was not sure before, and erred on the side of prudence; but Anne Gilhooly for a dollar a week will be glad to come for two half-days, and do the work our way, and under our direction. She will contrive to have an hour

or two out of that time for scrubbing and cleaning."

"Still—"

"It is best every way," persisted Faith. "As pleasant weather comes, we will not enjoy being shut up so much in the house. Our time and talents will be more valuable, if you choose to put it that way, for out-of-door work, looking after the flowers, and such lighter occupations. Besides that, our washing would soon be too much for us, when we begin to wear thin dresses, and have elaborate flounces and furbelows to do up."

"Don't plan so far ahead, you absurd Faith," cried Mrs. Spinning-Jack, laughing in spite of herself at this.

"Well! that is settled at all events!" replied Faith. "I shall send word to Anne Gilhooly to-morrow. Meantime—"

"Can't we have those chickens now, Miss Faith?" asked Charley, who had just caught the idea that changes were in contemplation.

"Exactly! You may go on a search for them, to-morrow—"

"Oh, I've got them already picked out for you." Farmer Cricketfield has some beauties, a

splendid young cockerel and five pullets, that he'll sell for five dollars. They're cheap, too."

"That's just the thing! They will console you for resigning the washing-machine to Anne Gilhooly."

"Is she going to do it? I'm sorry for that. It was fun!" said Charley, regretfully; but the proposed purchase of the chickens soon absorbed all his thoughts again.

CHAPTER XVII.

SPRING'S GAINS AND COMFORTS.

Sweet daughter of a rough and stormy sire,
Hoar Winter's blooming child ; delightful Spring !
Whose unshorn locks with leaves
And swelling birds are crowned.

A. L. BARBAULD.

IT is said that the North American Indians contrived an odd way of prolonging their powers of endurance on a long journey. They would on starting carry a heavy log of wood over their shoulders, and tramp resolutely along under this burden till forced to throw it aside for very weariness. Then, refreshed by the relief, they would press forward with renewed elasticity of step, seeming to leave fatigue behind them with the weight which caused it. How far there may be any real philosophy in this primitive practice is perhaps questionable ; but the mind always so dominates the body, that its sense of relief, however imaginary, becomes physical also.

Thus our harmonious little party felt the lessening of their tasks, as spring's timid approach relaxed winter's grim hold upon the world around them, with a curious sense of joyous freedom. They had never wearied of them at the time, or felt any impatience at the bond of union thus formed ; still, beginning their novel life together in the very depth of winter, and having so many discouragements of storm and enforced seclusion, it was wonderful that their cheery industry never flagged. Now, when April's uncertain smiles beamed upon them through watery clouds, tempting alike to idling abroad or less vigorous energy within, it was an inexpressible comfort to feel that such relaxation was permissible. It was a well-earned reward, and they enjoyed it keenly. As the days slowly lengthened, and the sun's more vertical rays grew more and more ardent, it was a comfort to see expenses, cares, and anxieties, as well as actual labor, grow lighter and easier every day.

Faith took an absurd delight in relegating the stove in her room to the upper region of its summer repose, on one of the first balmy days, in spite of the treacherous-look-

ing clouds that still hung lowering on the horizon.

"It don't make any difference what storms come," she protested, "at this season, it can't be possible I will need the stove again. The parlor fire keeps my room too warm, as it is."

The next enterprise was to procure wire netting enough to inclose part of the slope on the east side of the house, as a place of security for the chickens. Charley had brought them home in great triumph as soon as Faith pronounced their welcome; and he was now so entirely devoted to their care that it was fortunate his household duties were growing so much lighter. The chickens soon acquired such a home feeling in consequence of Charley's sedulous feeding and caressing, as to be permitted to wander at will through the day. They found much amusement, chicken fashion, in strolling busily over their new domain, picking up many seeds and berries which delighted their taste, as well as in scratching busily after the insects and worms which their instinct taught them were or ought to be in the ground.

It took much patience to put up with "sweet spring's" very unreliable temper. A bright

sunny day would tempt them to don light wraps and overshoes, and to make a faint beginning toward gardening. Leaves and broken twigs would be raked into heaps, although in a state of sodden dampness yet, and the balmy breeze invoked to aid the sunshine in drying them, so as to be fit for a bonfire. Then the breeze would come with a vengeance, scattering with its fierce blast all the heaps into chaos again, and presently bringing a dash of rain to restore the moisture that had nearly fled before so much persuasion. The fair trio would sigh and laugh at this perversity of fate, and turn their thoughts to indoor arrangements. They would summon Anne Gilhooly from her wash-tub or ironing-board, and get some windows cleaned, while they dusted and put in order one room after another, till all were neat and trim as dainty hands could make them. Thus, in the intervals of the weather's caprices, the whole house gradually took on its air and garb of summer beauty. Faith had always decried the annual or semi-annual house-cleaning which so absorbs most feminine souls to the mortal terror and annoyance of the masculine mind. She believed in keeping her whole establishment in comfort-

able array always; never having any room too splendid for use, or too unneat for the inspection of the most fastidious eye. While the parlor and dining-room fires were kept up, those rooms of course could not be entirely arranged; but the others were soon fresh and orderly, with the snowy curtains and clear glass that were in such charming contrast with the dark wood-work and furniture.

In spite of winter's distant muttering, the days became more and more sunshiny. Here and there bits of dry settled ground showed themselves, which Faith hastened to clear of all rubbish, while she peered anxiously among the roots of the grass to see if any tiny green shoots were beginning to appear. The deferred bonfires at length came off, and were a glorious success, if the flushed faces and merry laughter they caused were any token of it. Then, as the ground was now quite dry enough for being put in thorough order, they all spent many bright golden hours in the sweet fresh air whose very breathing was a delight. Trimming the plants and shrubbery, as well as the vines and bushes in the fruit-garden was one of the first duties; and soon there crept over the

space where winter had so recently raged and stormed an air of cultivation and neatness that was eminently satisfactory. One token of spring was unwelcome enough. Feebly straying along the muddy highways came meager cattle, who were glad of even the scanty forage they could thus find, after a long dreary winter's sojourn in dark stables, where often their only provision was musty hay and wretched cornstalks. Faith looked at them pityingly, yet with unyielding defiance. They should not prowl over her domains, and destroy her tender plants. The gates that had been fastened open for so many months, must now be carefully closed at night and watched a little in the day-time, too. Along the stream at the foot of the hill there needed more effectual fencing, as farmer Cricketfield's cows often waded through the water, and looked longingly toward the grassy slope above. This was somewhat of a problem to Faith at first; but taking courage from the desperateness of the circumstances, she contrived, with Charley's aid, to intertwine some barbed wire among the trees and shrubs along the edge of the stream, which made a sufficient defense for the purpose.

Thrifty Faith thought twice, however, before she could bring herself to incur even the trifling expense of buying the barbed wire. The money spent on the chickens she had bestowed more willingly, knowing how soon it would be repaid and more than doubled; but the fence saved only the bother of watching and driving out the cows. It was not a tangible advantage, as she looked at it; and it worried her a little.

Then a new comfort came to her. There was a rough stone-wall half-way down the hill which separated her first purchase of land from the bit she bought afterwards. It had been left standing merely because of the expense of moving it; but was always an eye-sore to Faith, who was constantly studying various ways of getting rid of it.

One day, farmer Cricketfield accosted her as she was pruning a privet-hedge which she had made along the road and inside the fence, from one gate to the other.

"Well, now, Miss Arden!" he said, looking round with an air of gracious approval. "You have made a great improvement hereabout, surely."

"Do you think so?" answered Faith, smil-

ing, as she followed his glance, till it rested on the one blot in the landscape, that ugly stone-wall, and then sighing impatiently at its impracticable aspect.

"Yes, you've done a right down smart heap of work!" replied the farmer. "I see you don't like the look of that wall down there. It are rather unsightly, that's a fact," glancing carelessly across the road as he spoke, but watching Faith covertly, too.

"I wish I could get rid of it," began Faith, eagerly.

"Well, now!" with his usual drawl. "Them stone would come mighty handy now if I only had 'em over at my barn."

"What would you do with them?" and Faith's breath came quickly as she caught a gleam of welcome hope from the suggestion.

"Well, there's a wet place want's drainin' and a bit of wall that had oughter be picked up. I guess I can get stone enough round at odd places on the farm; but them there's kinder handy."

"Would you like to have them? Will you buy them?" asked Faith, quietly.

"Oh, now! as to buying 'em!" returned

the farmer. "I thought may be you wanted to get rid of 'em, and I'd take 'em away for you."

"If they are worth moving, they are worth paying for," said Faith, looking straight into the man's face, and fixing his uncertain gaze with the cool directness of her's.

"I don't know!" he began, turning away with an air of indifference, that was very badly assumed. "I don't 'spose you'd get a chance every day to get rid of them stone; and they're no use to you any way."

"Not where they are, certainly," admitted Faith; "but they could be rolled down the hill and laid along the edge of the stream. They would make quite a good fence against those troublesome cows of yours."

"'Taint no fault of theirs, poor creeters!" said the farmer. "They don't know any better. If they was boys now, they'd do worse, and mean it, too!"

Faith laughed a little at this original view of the comparative sinfulness of boys and cows, but did not reply.

"Well! what are you wantin' now for them stone, seein' you are so keen for makin' suthin' out of 'em?" asked the farmer, after a pause.

"I don't know what they are worth!" said Faith, frankly. "I might ask—"

"Never you mind about askin'," interrupted the farmer, hastily. "I tell you I'd give twenty-five dollars for them stone if I had 'em over at my barn; but it'll cost all of that to haul 'em out."

Faith pondered a moment, and then said: "I'll sell them to you for that, and deliver them, too."

"But—how?" muttered the farmer, very much taken aback at this proposition.

"I mean," said Faith, gravely, though her eyes twinkled with subdued fun as she spoke. "I will take twenty-five dollars for the stones, and hire some one to take them over to you."

"But it'll cost a sight! and who'll you get?"

"I don't know! somebody."

"Now, see here!" exclaimed the farmer, at his wit's end with perplexity. "No man can haul them stone just as I want 'em but myself, and—"

"Well, I'll hire you, then!" said Faith, looking up into his face, with a sudden smile of amusement.

"Lands' sake! you're a clever one at a bar-

gain! Well, see here, now! I'll give you ten dollars for them stone, and haul 'em myself," and the farmer fairly groaned as he made the offer.

Faith shook her head.

"Make it twenty!" she said, briefly.

"Twenty! lands' sake! I couldn't do it! Say fifteen. I vow I can't give more."

Faith paused reflectively.

"Well, I'll take fifteen then; but I know it won't cost you five dollars to move them. Only it must be done at once, and done neatly, too."

Faith kept her countenance with difficulty until the farmer was gone. Then she fairly laughed with delight as she hastened to tell Mrs. Spinning-Jack what a wonderful piece of good fortune had come to her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WATER-CRESSES AND WILD FLOWERS.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.—KING SOLOMON.

FAITH and Mrs. Spinning-Jack had been pottering about nearly all the morning, half in and half out of the house one soft warm day in which the moist fragrant earth had seemed to petition for the gentle soothing touches with which they had consigned to its motherly care their first ventures of seeds. Not mere flower-seeds, by any means. They were too practical to give their first thoughts to anything less useful than the early radishes and lettuce, the peas and beans, which would so delightfully vary their supply of vegetables. Now, resting a moment on the piazza, and glancing proudly on the neat borders where they had patted the earth so deftly over the seeds, Faith called out with pretended impatience:

“You lazy child! havn’t you got lunch ready for us yet?”

Daisy appeared in the open doorway, with a somewhat doleful air of discontent, as she answered, slowly:

“Oh, yes! it’s ready as much as I know how to make it; but I wish I had some of your radishes. I do just pine for the taste of some fresh green thing.”

“Well! I don’t think even our scientific planting will furnish the table quite so soon as that. Where is Charley?”

“Oh, he’s off as usual watching farmer Crickfield load up stones. He has a great notion to be a farmer.”

“We won’t wait, then—” began Faith, but at that instant Charley rushed rather boisterously up the hill, holding in both hands a great mass of dripping sprays of leaves which he eagerly presented to Faith, not at all regarding her dainty shrinking from the drops of water that trickled through his fingers.

“Don’t be afraid! it’s good—the farmer’s boy says it’s water-cress. Don’t you know, mother, we used to have it in town?”

“How delightful!” cried Daisy, grasping

the wet mass rapturously, and peering closely into its recesses.

“Are you sure it’s water-cress?” she asked, doubtfully.

“Of course it is!” cried Charley, indignantly. “It hasn’t grown much yet; but there’s lots of it down in the brook.”

It was almost absurd to see the elation with which this simple discovery filled their hearts. Dainty and delicate as were the fresh, cool sprays of water-cress, making just the addition to their lunch that it needed and Daisy had so longed for, it was, more than all else, the sense of its being a token of Nature’s prodigality, rather than the result of their own exertions, which won for it its warm welcome.

Some days later, Charley came in, all dusty and disheveled, proclaiming exultingly as he displayed two fresh eggs that he had been crouching behind some bushes for more than an hour watching the hens laying them. After being praised and scolded in a breath for his patience and his disordered attire, he was sent off for some fresh water-cress before he resumed his usual neat appearance for lunch.

It was now nearly the middle of May, and as

they rose from the lunch-table, Faith asked, soberly:

“Do you think it would be safe, Letty, to give up the parlor-stove? We haven’t had any fire there for a week; and I’m so tired of looking at the dismal thing.”

“Let’s clear it away, then!” answered Mrs. Spinning-Jack. “I don’t think there is anything so dreary-looking as a stove without a fire in it.”

“You know we could sit in the dining-room, if there should come a cool evening,” added Daisy.

And so it was done at once. Anne Gilhooly had just finished her ironing, and was preparing to go home, but good-naturedly stayed to empty and polish up the stove, and to help Charley carry it to the attic.

Then, with so many willing hands and such light hearts to inspire their active movements, the parlor was quickly swept, dusted, and rearranged. A table with a white cover, and a pretty vase of old-fashioned design, soon took the place of the stove, whose warm glow had so faithfully cheered them through the winter, and which now mourned in the attic’s loneliness its depart-

ed glory. Fresh lace curtains replaced those which showed the soiling touch of fire and light's long reign; and when all the plants were carried out upon the piazza, and the bay-window was once more accessible, Faith's favorite rocking-chair again found its place there. She sat down in the pleasant shade of the closed shutters with a curious sense of returning to the first hours of her resting there, nearly a year ago. The intervening months of busy work, of eager hopes and plans, of mingled triumph and discouragements, seemed like a long dream from which she was slowly awakening.

"What is it, Faith?" asked Mrs. Spinning-Jack, coming anxiously to her friend's side, as she noted her sudden paleness and air of faint bewilderment.

"Nothing!" said Faith, smiling gently as she roused herself from her almost stupor. "I believe I was dreaming, and am glad to wake and find you are a reality, dear Letty."

"I am a very substantial one, I am sure," returned her friend, complacently. "I was just waiting to ask you if it wouldn't do to set your plants in the ground at once. Daisy and Charley are eager to go at it."

“I’m half afraid—and yet—there can’t be any serious frost as late as this. We’ll risk it, anyway.”

It was far easier to set the plants in the ground again, especially with so much assistance, than Faith had found it to take them up in the fall. Many were in full bloom; and the brilliant verbenas and geraniums, as well as the rich-hued roses and carnations now gave such an added air of cultivation and beauty to the scene that more than one passer-by paused to admire it.

“How splendidly everything prospers with us,” cried Faith to her friend, a glad light shining through tears in her bright eyes. “Winter may have been comparatively a trial, when we were devoting every thought, every hour, to questions of economy and successful management; and yet it was a happy enough time, even then. Now, when life is so much easier and brighter, how good it all is!”

“Yes! what with our water-cress and fresh eggs, our growing crops, and our flowers which we enjoy as much as if they too were eatable, what a truly sylvan life it is—so pure, so healthful!”

"Just look at that child Daisy!" said Faith, turning to greet the young girl who came up the steep slope panting and out of breath with her haste and ardent efforts.

"Are they not lovely!" she asked, eagerly, as she displayed the rich masses of wild flowers and ferns she had been gathering. There were sprays of the wild May-apple, with the delicate wood crocuses and anemones, besides the pure snowy blossoms of the bloodroot and the pretty squirrel-cups.

"Where did you find them? I had no idea they were out yet!" exclaimed Mrs. Spinning-Jack and Faith in a breath.

"I've been watching them for several days," returned the girl, flushing with pleasure at the gratification they showed. "It looked so sad in the parlor after your plants were taken out, I thought these would make it bright again. May I put them in the vases, Miss Faith?"

"Of course you may, dear child! But keep some for the dining-table. I will make it your especial task from now till snow comes again, to keep that always decorated with flowers."

"A charming vocation!" said Mrs. Spinning-Jack, as Daisy flitted away with her flow-

ers, very proud and pleased, and yet too shy in her sensitive joy to give it other expression than one glance of delight toward Faith.

“Yes, she is a very flower herself, so sweet and true in every act and thought. Letty, your Daisy has won such a place in my heart that it will ache very grievously if she ever leaves me again.”

“We will be only too happy if that need never be,” returned her friend, pressing her hand with grateful warmth as she spoke.

CHAPTER XIX.

SUMMER'S JOYS.

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her.—WORDSWORTH.

All green and fair the summer lies,
Just budded from the bud of spring,
With tender blue of wistful skies,
And winds which softly sing.

SUSAN COOLIDGE.

THE sweet leafy month of June found Faith and her little household resting in utter content beneath its sunny skies. The transition from winter to summer had been accomplished, and the heavier tasks of that chill season were laid aside for the daintier duties of the present. The house was thoroughly put in order, and the last stove for merely heating purposes, that in the dining-room, was banished to keep company with its fellows in the attic. Everywhere the fluttering of snowy draperies, the faint odor of wild flowers, and the grateful shade of closed

shutters, proclaimed the sweet reign of summer's early birth.

The grounds, under the care of such tasteful gardeners, assumed a beauty beyond compare. Here were no blunders of uneducated zeal. Every plant was placed with due regard for its comparative needs of shade, sunshine, or moisture. They were not trimmed into stiff primness, or ordered to flourish under conditions foreign to their desires. Consequently they bloomed with wonderful brilliance and profusion. The soft, velvety greensward, the result of Faith's liberal sowing of grass and clover seed during the previous summer, presented now the most cheering suggestions of rich soil and careful tending. The dogwood-bushes were in bloom even yet, and many other wild shrubs, such as the bayberry and spice-wood, were throwing out leaves of tenderest green, while the fragrant sprays of chestnut-blossoms, the sweet linden and birch trees filled the air with a perfume that was delicious, with its faint yet penetrating delicacy. All the generous contributions of vines and bushes from Faith's thoughtful friends, which she had planted so hopefully in the fall, were now grow-

ing, as she thought, with a vigor and earnestness that was never seen before. Lovely roses, sweet sprays of honeysuckle, the lilac and syringa blossoms, mingled their more powerful cultivated odors with those of the wild woods, whose slender branches swayed protectingly above them. Hours of busy idleness kept them all in a very fairy-land of enchantment, that even to Faith was fascinating through her intense love for Nature's every phase, while to the Spinning-Jacks, its novelty made it a dream of new delight every hour.

It was like living an actual poem. Out-of-doors every moment that the weather permitted, training up the fast-growing vines, snipping off every dead leaf or twig that was within reach, and keeping the grass clean and smooth as if it were a veritable carpet, they grew healthy and rosy as they drew long breaths of the pure fresh air, and wondered if any one was ever so happy and free from care before.

Daisy seriously hunted up Milton's "Paradise Lost" one rainy day, and read aloud his description of the "Garden of Eden" to her mother and Faith, as they sat at work. Putting

the book down with a long sigh, the girl said, almost sadly :

“I used to think that was the most beautiful thing I had ever read, and I even pined for the lost Eden ; but now—”

“Well ! and now ?” asked her mother, looking up, with some surprise in her tone.

“It isn’t like our life here on bright days !” replied Daisy, dreamily. “When the sun shines here, is not our paradise better than the one Eve was so foolish as to lose ?”

“In reality, yes !” said Faith, startled at the girl’s thought, yet deeply interested, too. “Eve didn’t know how to cherish the joy of her existence. She didn’t know of evil, nor guessed at the outer gloom of the world, in contrast with which paradise was so bright.”

“I suppose if they had lived first in the world, and had then been taken into paradise, they never would have let any temptation come between them and its enjoyment,” said Daisy, very thoughtfully.

“Those who have had that experience, those who have died and are in paradise now, must surely feel that,” replied Faith. “They can never wish to return even to their loved ones.

But remember, Daisy," she added, in a lighter tone, for she did not like to see the shadow that crept over the girl's bright face, "there were no rainy days in paradise, so far as we know. They are a trial everywhere, I fear."

"I don't see what they would have done in case of a shower," said Mrs. Spinning-Jack, smiling. "Even the shelter of the trees would not have protected them long."

"They hadn't any hats or clothes to spoil," returned Daisy, lightly, for youth is ever quickly cheered. "The showers must have been cool and refreshing on a hot summer's day, and afterward they only had to go into the sun again to get their hair dry."

"In our paradise we have to consider the question of keeping our clothes dry, to be sure," said Faith, "but then we have a shelter that protects us nicely, and has its own attractions, too."

In truth, it was well that an occasional rainy day did drive them indoors, for the few needs that the house presented for care and keeping it in due array might have been otherwise wofully neglected. There was, however, very much less housework to do at this season.

Beginning the long days early, and rising with the sun itself, getting breakfast was a very trifling affair, when the preparation of coffee was often its only labor. This, with the light, sweet bread that Daisy had learned to make so good, and the addition of radishes or water-cress, some daintily sliced ham or smoked beef, and the fragrant wild strawberries with which the neighboring fields kept them well supplied, made an ideal feast, as delicious as it was healthful.

It needed but a few minutes for those quick fingers to wash and put away the breakfast paraphernalia, and then the whole day was before them for whatsoever work or amusement they should choose to seek. Lunch was a mere shadow of trouble. Often it was brought out on the piazza, and enjoyed there as a rural repast, indeed. No fire was ever lighted for its service. There were always cake, fruit, and salads, with cold meat to supply all the heartiest appetite could demand. A glass of milk, or of fruit sherbet of which Daisy made many delicious varieties, accompanied these viands, and not until the time for preparing dinner were the plates and other articles used washed and put away.

The various wild fruits, for gathering which so many hands were now ready and eager, promised to save no trifling amount of last summer's outlay, when Faith was too busy to seek them herself. Already the wild strawberries had been procured in quantities sufficient for nearly every meal, while Faith's supply from the garden was quite fair, considering it was the first year of their production. Thus, the items of purchased fruits and made desserts scarcely found place in the June record, and already the prospect of raspberries, currants, and blackberries from their own vines was very encouraging, while the wild ones and the huckleberries would also be plentiful.

Early peaches were already assuming rounded proportions and rosy cheeks that offered suggestions of new delight at no distant day in their perfect flavor. Even pears would ripen before many weeks, and the clusters of grapes on the new vines, if but few and small as yet, would make at least one dainty dessert in the early autumn.

Once in a while, a breath from the outer world would come to stir up a languid interest in its concerns, or to faintly disturb their re-

pose with remembrance of the money questions, which are at the bottom of all earthly discords. Faith had few anxieties now of this kind. She had learned her ability to pay off her one burden, unaided, out of her own income, at the rate of at least one hundred dollars per year, and she knew, under the present arrangement, that her sharing her home with the Spinning-Jacks, while productive of so much joy and comfort to herself, was also absorbing still more rapidly the incubus she was learning to smile at, in confident security of becoming its mistress. But her friend had still the burden of anxiously hoping to realize the insurance, which would give so much added ease to her existence.

CHAPTER XX.

THE HAVEN WHERE THEY WOULD BE.

To hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;
Neither to change, to falter, nor repent ;

· · · · ·
This is alone life, joy, empire, and victory.

SHELLEY.

FAITH sat in her chair in the bay-window, leaning back, and looking pale and bewildered. Her little writing-table was at her side, and on it were spread a number of bills, while several freshly written sheets of paper showed a long array of figures and calculations.

It was the last day of June. All her bills for this last quarter of her year's residence in her house lay before her, and she had once more made a statement of her financial position. She had felt no trepidation this time as to the result. She knew, with the greatly lessened expenses of fire and light, and the unwonted sup-

plies of fruit and vegetables from her own garden, that even Anne Gilhooly's wages were more than balanced by these advantages, but far beyond her most sanguine hopes was the reality.

There had been no outlay at all for the house or its furnishing. For herself personally were only these purchases:

One lawn dress.....	\$3 00
One morning dress.....	1 75
One pair of slippers.....	1 00
One hat-frame.....	30
	<hr/>
	\$6 05

Making up her dress herself, and making last summer's black-lace hat over again, in both which acts of skill she was well versed, made Faith's summer outfit of very slight expense, indeed, considering how much it included.

Then the statement of living expenses was as follows:

One hundred and thirty-seven quarts of milk.....	\$6 85
Fifty-eight pounds of beef, seventeen pounds of veal, twenty-five pounds of poultry, eleven pounds of lamb.....	19 15
Four pounds of oatmeal.....	60
Twelve pounds of hominy.....	60
Five pounds of rice.....	35
One package of macaroni.....	23
Twenty-eight pounds of sugar.....	1 80
Yeast.....	25
One bushel of potatoes.....	1 00
Two pounds of tapioca.....	20

Five dozen eggs.....	\$1 25
Thirty-two pounds of butter.....	8 00
Seventy pounds of flour.....	1 65
Wire-netting and barbed wire.....	75
One ton and a half of coal.....	8 75
Two gallons of kerosene.....	40
Oysters and fish.....	3 50
Baking-powder.....	50
Sixteen pounds of coffee.....	4 00
Two pounds of tea.....	1 20
Soap, starch, bluing.....	1 30
Spices and condiments.....	45
Wages.....	13 00
Chickens and corn.....	5 25
Asparagus.....	60
Ham and smoked beef.....	3 15
	<hr/>
	\$84 78

This was encouraging, indeed, considering that the item of wages, their one great luxury, was nearly the largest one in the list. There was no need for anticipating any greater ratio of expense for the next six months than this, as their fragmentary patches of peas, beans, and other summer vegetables promised full supplies throughout the season.

The statement of the whole was:

Of resources, Faith's own income for three months.....	\$75 00
Balance from last account.....	63 25
Realized from stone-wall.....	15 00
Mrs. Spinning-Jack's contribution.....	87 50
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	\$240 75

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The house expenses for three months were	\$84 78	
Personal expenses for three months.....	6 05	
Taxes and interest for three months.....	10 75	
		<hr/>
		101 58
		<hr/>
		\$139 17

Faith might well feel a moment's sense of overpowering wonder at this result. With this amount to pay on the principal of the mortgage, it would be reduced materially, indeed. She even was considering if she might not venture to add the sum of twenty dollars and eighty-three cents in advance of her next installment of income, to cut the mortgage down to just five hundred dollars.

"There can be no risk," she thought, as she began to recover her half-scattered wits. "I'm sure to save more than that on the next quarter, and it keeps reducing the interest so delightfully. Ah, that blessed Letty!"

Almost as the word formed itself in her mind, Mrs. Spinning-Jack passed the window with an unwonted air of joyousness, waving a letter toward Faith very excitedly.

"A letter for me?" asked Faith, carelessly. "I did not know you were going to the post-office."

"I did not intend to at first, but the children coaxed me to. No, it's not for you—it's just the best thing in the world, Faith! It's a letter from my lawyer, telling me of his success in that insurance matter. I'm too delighted! too—"

She stopped, out of breath with her hurried speech, while her trembling lips and the bright drops that stood in her eyes showed how strongly she was agitated by this long-hoped-for news.

"Oh, how good it is!" cried Faith, in genuinely glad sympathy. "What a relief and comfort for you, dear Letty. I can't tell you how glad I am! Now you can send Charley to school, as you wanted to so much!"

"And help you with your mortgage," replied her friend, eagerly. "I thought of that first of all."

"No, no!" interrupted Faith. "You are doing too much already—"

"But, just listen, you obstinate soul! It's as good as if I had got it at first. The court decides entirely in my favor; and the insurance company pays interest for the time I've had to wait for it, and—"

"But the lawyer?" interposed Faith.

"He has his costs, he says, whatever they are, and does not charge me anything for his services."

"Isn't that very extraordinary?" asked Faith, doubtfully. "I never heard of such a thing before."

"Well, it must be on account of these 'costs'! I'm sure I don't quite know what they are, or where they come from; but it must be all right, you know."

"Yes! I suppose, being a lawyer, he knows what is due him. He wouldn't fail to take care of himself. But, Letty, it's so delightful—"

"Yes! the six months' interest he sends a check for. Here it is, just one hundred and fifty dollars. You must pay that on the mortgage, Faith, and—"

"Indeed, I won't!" cried Faith, snatching up her balance-sheet triumphantly. "Look here, you foolish Letty! I've nearly a hundred and forty dollars for the mortgage left over."

"Impossible! let me see! are you sure it's right?"

Seeing, at a glance, how truly this was a

fact, Mrs. Spinning-Jack laughed half hysterically as she said :

“Really, Faith ! it’s a pity, with our genius for managing, that we should have the burden of added riches thrust upon us. What will we do with our superfluity of income, after the mortgage is paid off?”

“Oh ! money always flies fast enough, be it much or little,” said Faith ; “but the mortgage is being cared for sufficiently without your adding this charming windfall. You will need it for the children as well as yourself. You’ve stinted yourselves too much in personal expenses ; and then, Charlie’s outfit for school—”

“He can’t go to school before October, so there’s no use getting him ready now,” interrupted Mrs. Spinning-Jack, positively. “No, Faith ! unless you want to turn us out-of-doors, you must come to my terms. It is but fair that we should pay for our shelter and home comfort, as well as for actual food and warmth, as long as we are able to. While we are all here, you must let me pay at least two hundred dollars a year more. That will still leave two hundred for our clothing, which is more than we need.”

"But Charley's schooling will take—" began Faith.

"That will not make any material difference," persisted Mrs. Spinning-Jack. "I don't know yet what it will cost, and it's three months off. Let us leave that question till then. Meantime you must take this check, and apply it to the mortgage; and then we'll go on with our old life, unless you want to get rid of us."

"Of course I don't," said Faith, "but at least we must live more comfortably; we must have a servant."

"Oh, don't!" cried Daisy and Charley, in one breath, who came up just in time to catch the last words. "There'll be no comfort anywhere if you have a servant."

"And you can't, any way, till I go to school," added Charley, triumphantly. "I dare say you'll want one then; but I've got the only room you could put her in, and I don't want to give it up, either."

"What would be the good of a servant?" asked Daisy, more gently.

"To do the cooking and all the work, you foolish child!" said Faith, much amused at the girl's air of perplexity.

"But do you think you could find one who would do things the way we like to have them?" urged Daisy. "You always said you liked my cooking so much! why must I give it up to a stranger?"

"My dear girl! no servant could do as well as you do, of course, but we could teach her; and you'll be glad, when the hotter days come, not to have such work to do."

"Well!" said Daisy, contentedly. "Wait till that day comes then. I'd rather do the work, as you call it, even if I didn't enjoy it as I do ever so much, than be bothered trying to teach a stupid servant, and eating all sorts of ill-cooked rubbish in the mean time."

And so they all felt upon due consideration. It was unanimously decided that they would take whatever added comfort their increased incomes would permit, without wasting their means on a mere regard for appearances in which no real benefit could be found. Anne Gilhooly could come oftener; perhaps for an hour or two every day, or whenever they had anything for her to do, but they would not take into their ideal existence any new and discordant element. There were many higher enjoy-

ments, many pleasures that were refining and elevating, which were better worth securing than mere immunity from the daily tasks in which they had all taken such delight.

In the future, when Charley was at school, and winter's dark reign had recommenced, the question might be reconsidered; but, till then, it seemed needless to entertain it.

CHAPTER XXI.

GOLDEN DREAMS.

The silence that accepts merit as the most natural thing in the world is the highest applause.—EMERSON.

THE next morning Faith walked demurely into Mr. Cherubino's house (he was the friend that had lent her the money represented by her mortgage), and with shining eyes and lips that vainly tried not to quiver with the mirthful content that bubbled up from her heart, she said quietly as she entered his presence:

"I've come to pay the interest."

"Ah!" he said, as he warmly shook hands with her, and searchingly scanned her face, whose air of suppressed agitation at once interested him. "You are very prompt," he went on, reassuringly. "Don't you know you have thirty days' grace in paying interest?"

"Thirty days' disgrace, I should call it, if I had the money ready, or could possibly get it."

As she spoke she laid a little package of bills before him, which he opened, and gravely counted. Then, turning to his writing-desk, and taking up a pen, he said:

“I will give you a receipt.”

“Wait!” said Faith huskily, as she placed another roll of bills on the desk, while her voice trembled so with triumphant gladness that she could scarcely control its utterances. “You know I undertook to make another payment on the principal.”

Mr. Cherubino silently took the money, counted it, and laid it down again.

“Anything more?” he asked dryly, in a gruff, cynical tone that contrasted oddly with the kindly glance of his dark-gray eyes.

“You aggravating man!” cried Faith, all smiles and tears now in her sudden revulsion of feeling as she threw off her assumed air of composure. “I thought you’d be at least surprised.”

“I’m never surprised at anything a woman does who has half a soul and will of her own. If you had brought the whole amount and a few thousands over which you wanted me to invest for you, I should only have wondered if

you had found a mine, or had learned the secret of turning your rocks into diamonds."

"I wish I had!" returned Faith, laughing. "But don't you want to hear how I have accomplished this?"

"Of course I do. When you bring me more than a whole year's income in one payment, I must naturally be curious to know what you have been living on all this time. You look fat and hearty enough, I'm sure."

In a few words Faith gave him an outline of her having combined forces with the Spinning-Jacks, and the surprising results of the experiment.

"So!" commented Mr. Cherubino, in his dry, emphatic way. "You find you can live comfortably alone on one hundred and fifty dollars a year, without including personal expenses, and that four of you can live still more comfortably on three hundred and fifty dollars. Now, have you carried the calculation far enough to ascertain how many inmates you must have to live on nothing?"

Faith's cheery, ringing laugh at this was irresistible, and he joined in it heartily for a moment.

"It really does seem that such a point might be reached," Faith said presently. "I do think the gain has been, more than anything else, in our having kept no servant. Besides their wages, they always waste as much as they consume; and then they misuse the most expensive materials just because they do not understand their value or capabilities. You see with us there was never the least waste. We could have many delicacies that would otherwise have been beyond our means, because we used only as much as we needed, and had no fragments to throw away. I noticed that especially when I got the chickens. Most people have enough refuse from the kitchen to feed a dozen or two; but I have had to buy corn for them."

"They ought to pick up bugs and things at this season," said Mr. Cherubino.

"So they do; but still they keep us supplied with eggs now, and I can afford to be generous. We have even one brood of nine little ones already, while another hen is doing her best to hatch out thirteen."

"I shall come over soon and feast on broiled spring-chicken," replied Mr. Cherubino, gravely.

“Indeed, you won’t!” cried Faith, indignantly. “Do you suppose I would have the little things killed that have learned to eat so prettily out of our hands?”

“Not while they are little, certainly; but you or some one will have to eat them one of these days, you know. I never heard of chickens dying of old age.”

Faith shook her head, and declared the day of doom for her feathered pets must at least be far off; and then took leave of Mr. Cherubino, returning home with heart and purse equally light and unburdened.

Encountering Mrs. Spinning-Jack some hours later, as she came in from a walk with Daisy, Faith exclaimed:

“Letty! I’ve been thinking over our affairs, and some improvements have occurred to me.”

“Canst thou

“ ‘Gild refined gold, or paint the lily,
Or throw a perfume on the violet?’ ”

asked her friend, mildly.

“Are we so near perfection already?” returned Faith.

“I really don’t see where improvement is

possible," replied Mrs. Spinning-Jack. "Take my advice, Faith, and don't try to work miracles."

"I am glad you are so content," persisted Faith, "but I've made an odd discovery."

"And what is that?"

"It seems Anne Gilhooly is a widow, instead of being a member of my own honorable fraternity, and she has a daughter."

"You don't say so! and this daughter—"

"Is a bright, rosy little lass of about a dozen summers."

"How unlike her gaunt, hard-favored parent!" murmured Mrs. Spinning-Jack, *sotto voce*.

"Some little bird must have whispered to Anne Gilhooly that fortune has been smiling on us; it could never have been the inspiration of her own genius; and she mildly suggests that her Rosianna is a handy child, if we had any 'chores' we could employ her in doing."

"But we havn't," began Mrs. Spinning-Jack.

"Just wait! It was all very well to have a little active occupation when we were so much shut up in the house during the winter; but I can't bear to see our pretty Daisy, in her dainty

fresh muslin dresses, poking about the kitchen, getting dinner."

"But she likes it."

"Yes! but that isn't the question. The days are so long now that dinner is over an hour before sunset, and Daisy spends some very sultry hours in the kitchen, which would be more pleasantly passed with us on the piazza or in the summer-house. Besides that, it is just the hour for callers, who defer going out till the heat of the day is past, and Daisy must not be denied to them again, as she was yesterday."

"She don't care in the least to see people," objected Mrs. Spinning-Jack.

"She ought to, then," returned Faith arbitrarily. "I don't think it is worth while to have Rosianna here all day. Getting breakfast in the cool of the morning is a mere pastime, and so is lunch. I propose to have Rosianna come to get dinner under Daisy's direction, and to have her clear up the breakfast and lunch dishes while it is cooking. Then, after dinner, before she goes home, she can put everything in order again, and leave the kitchen in readiness for our getting breakfast the next morning."

"But this will cost something!"

“Not so much! She’d gladly do it for fifty cents a week; and as dinner is the one meal for which it is difficult to make exact calculations, her using the fragments for her own will not be an appreciable expense. It will be a loss to the chickens rather than to us.”

“Oh, they can spare it!” returned Mrs. Spinning-Jack. “Really, Faith, this sounds very plausible; but it wouldn’t do to keep it up. I’m afraid our prosperity has turned your brain, and inspired visions of inexhaustible wealth.”

“I only mean to do it for the summer,” said Faith. “When Charley has gone to school in October, we will have a trifle less to do in the way of cooking, and will need to be more economical again. And then, when the days are shorter, Rosianna could not go home alone late in the evening.”

“Well! we’ll try it for three months, then; but Faith, you mustn’t grow lukewarm about the mortgage. Remember that is to be our first consideration.”

“If the fates don’t turn against us that will be paid off in two years more, at the furthest. Our interest grows less, too, you know, as we reduce the principal.”

“And then? you have surely carried your plans beyond a mere trifle of two years!”

“Yes! I have indeed looked into a peaceful future still further on,” cried Faith, with an emphatic nod of her head. “You need not smile in that provoking way, Letty! but I see in those restful happy days, only two years off, a nice bright girl, perhaps Rosianna herself, whom we will have drilled meantime into just the helpful servant we want, ever at hand to do all we do not choose to do ourselves, and never in the way when we prefer her absence. And then, our Charley will be home again. Two years at school are enough for a bright boy like him. Then I shall begin building again.”

“Building? Will you set us off in a separate establishment?”

“No, I can never spare you again! But I shall add a room outside the parlor and library, perhaps two of them if I feel inclined to restore the library to its former dignity; and then Charley can have better quarters than those he has so patiently put up with so far.”

“It’s all Charley!” cried Daisy’s voice at this moment, as she came up to them. “Have you no plans for me?”

"You are always in our hearts!" answered Faith, drawing the girl closely to her side. "How can we ever have a plan or thought that does not include you?"

"And what is it you are planning for?" asked Daisy; "the millennium?"

"The day when our mortgage will be paid off and Charley's school-days are over," said Faith, with a tremor of strong emotion in her voice. "Will not that be a millennium of joy and release to us all?"

"But there must be no servant!" cried Daisy willfully.

"You still love your household duties?" asked her mother.

"Better than anything!" returned the girl, with eager enthusiasm. "When you have a headache, and I bring you a cup of fragrant tea and a dainty bit of toast, with some violets or a rosebud by the side of your plate, isn't it a thousand times better than any servant could do? Would you enjoy it as much, or could I patiently see her stupid blundering over the task that belongs to me? And when I have studied up some new dessert, or given my mind to cooking more perfectly some toothsome dish

that we all like, is it not beyond the mere hired labor of a servant, however skillful? No! when you prefer such ministerings to mine, when you let a hireling come to take my vocation from me and stand in my place of honor, you will—I believe it would go near to breaking my heart!” added Daisy, after a slight pause, her voice breaking suddenly from its eager tones into those of pathetic entreaty.

“You dear child!” said Faith, profoundly moved by the girl’s loving appeal. “Don’t you know we can never like even the most skillful servant’s work as well as the result of your own tender ministrations. But the mere drudgery at least—”

“I have never found any!” interposed Daisy, eagerly. “But if you let me still perform the tasks I take such pride in, you may give Anne Gilhooly all the drudgery, as you call it. I don’t covet scrubbing, for instance.”

“That’s just because you don’t know how!” cried Charley, tauntingly, as he strolled up, holding a large cup of chestnut-leaves, deftly pinned together with thorns, and overflowing with wild raspberries, whose stains were plenti-

fully bestowed on his fingers as well as on his lips.

"Oh, how good!" exclaimed Daisy rapturously. "We'll have them for dessert with cream."

"Yes, that's a good enough way!" replied Charley condescendingly, "but, I say, Daisy, there'll be some splendid blackberries in about a week, ripe enough to make a jolly pudding. Couldn't you make one?"

"I never did—" began the girl doubtfully.

"I'll tell you," said Faith, "the good old-fashioned way. Letty, do you remember it? For our little party, Daisy, take a large cup of stale bread-crumbs, just moisten them with a little milk and two beaten eggs, add your blackberries, two cups full if you can get them, a pinch of salt and some spices if you choose, and tie it loosely in a floured cloth. Boil it an hour, and make a sauce of butter and sugar, with some wine. It is really a very delicate and satisfactory way of using both huckleberries and blackberries, especially when they are not fully ripe."

"Good!" pronounced Charley, who had listened intently. "Then I can pick 'em a day sooner."

They all laughed at this, and so the discussion ended for the moment, but Faith never forgot the glimpse Daisy had given them of her pure loving heart, so full of guileless zeal to serve those who were dear to her, so sensitively jealous of all other ministering to their daily comfort.

Shall we thus leave them, having shown how Faith, indeed, carried out her determination? How the problems of securing a satisfactory shelter, and of living in comfort on her seemingly insufficient income, were triumphantly solved?

Even Lady Disdain yielded ungrudgingly her meed of praise when she came with Mrs. Nymscywitch to admire the wonderful metamorphosis one short year of skilled management had wrought. That wild mass of rugged rocks had become a very Eden of beauty and bloom; and best of all were the cheery, happy faces which greeted their approach with such cordial smiles of welcome, speaking eloquently of the contented hearts that knew neither ache nor ungratified longing.

THE END.

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